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CORRESPONDENCE

True justice

To the editors:

Jeffrey Rosen's analysis of Justice White is insightful in many ways but inaccurate in others, and ultimately fails to capture the man ("The Next Justice," April 12). It therefore also misses at least part of what President Clinton should seek in replacing him.

Justice White is modest but secure in his own intellect. Because he knew that he could do the work without his clerks, his hiring decisions were not dictated by credentials or competition with other justices, and he could use the interview (as he apparently used Rosen's) to learn about the person rather than administer an ideological or intelligence test. His clerks are not afraid to talk back to him, and he is not afraid to have them challenge his thinking. The suggestion that he did not consistently do his own writing and thinking is preposterous.

To the central allegation, that he is not a theoretician, Justice White's response might be that he was hired to decide

cases, not philosophize. That his personal philosophy cannot be easily discerned from thirty-one years' worth of opinions is largely due to his personal style and a judicious desire to "first, do no harm." He kept broad pronouncements and separate opinions to a minimum. What Rosen views as a lack of coherent theory—accepting as governing law a constitutional or statutory interpretation to whose initial formulation White had originally dissented—is better viewed as a recognition that neither Court nor country is well served by flip-flopping of Court majorities or constant judicial bickering over every minor issue.

It is not surprising that a talented writer such as Rosen thinks that "literary success" is the hallmark of a good justice. But because Rosen is correct that justices are unpredictable, President Clinton should hesitate to select a pamphleteer who will seek to make a mark by leading the Court from one dramatic position to another. Proven judgment, known instincts, broad experience, modesty and careful craftsmanship, but not flashy writing. Not a Bork or a Tribe. Perhaps a White.

DAVID J. BURMAN
*Law clerk to Justice White,
October 1978 term
Seattle, Washington*

To the editors:

While it is certainly true that law clerks do a considerable amount of writing on behalf of judges, to suggest that a judge has no "meaningful connection" to his or her opinions is disingenuous.

As a clerk on a federal District Court, I can say that, in my experience, as well as in the experience of other law clerks I know, judges not only read and sign every opinion bearing their name, but edit anything that does not reflect their own views. Moreover, the opinion-writing process is an interactive one, and judges are consulted at various points along the way. Also, has Rosen forgotten about bench decisions, questions during oral argument, evidentiary rulings during a trial? These things constitute a significant portion of judges' duties and reflect their own abilities—not those of their law clerks (unless Rosen contemplates some Cyrano de Bergerac scenario).

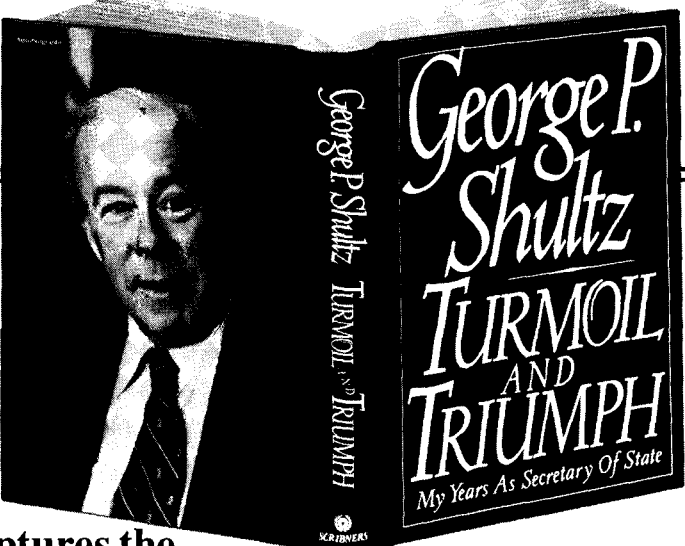
Finally, for the most part, article III judges on the lower courts (who make up most of the pool that Clinton will consider when selecting a nominee to the Supreme Court) have come from distinguished legal careers and/or state court judgeships. At the very least, they have proved themselves capable of their current position, and have received Senate confirmation for it. Although candidates should certainly be required to defend the substance of their writings, asking them to prove that the writings reflect their own work product is insulting. Rosen should not sell article III judges so short.

MAGGIE DRUCKER
New York, New York

To the editors:

I had the honor of clerking for Justice White during the October 1980 term. As I read it, Jeffrey Rosen's thesis is that Justice White was a man without constitutional vision. I respectfully disagree. Any careful reader of Justice White's opinions will discern a clear constitutional vision in which the democratic process predominates over the judicial; consistent with that vision of the role of the Court, or any individual justice, is not to promote particular ideologies, but to decide cases in a pragmatic way that permits the political branches to shoulder primary responsibility for governing our society. Inherent in this more pragmatic and less activist view is a belief that judicial opinions are not a proper vehicle for intellectual pretension and self-promotion. The purpose of an opinion, especially a majority opinion, is quite simply to decide the case in an intellectually and analytically sound manner.

My recollections of Justice White differ markedly from the description of Justice



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White provided by Rosen. Yes, Justice White was an athlete, but I'm not sure what that has to do with anything. Certainly I don't see the dark connotations suggested by Rosen. I can say with certainty, however, that Justice White was never "brutal" toward me either in chambers or on the basketball court. Nor are any of the other adjectives Rosen uses to describe Justice White consistent with my experience. Justice White was completely involved in the writing of every opinion that issued from his chambers. And the final product was never, in my experience, a "cut and paste" job.

Rosen describes Justice White's jurisprudence as obsessed with scoring points. More jock imagery. This was not evident during the year I clerked. Rosen follows up this point with a brief mention of the cross-burning case in which Justice White criticized Justice Scalia for deciding the case on a theory that had never been presented to the Court. Rosen describes Scalia's opinion as "ingenious" and sees Justice White's response as an example of the latter's "love of technicalities." In fact, a good many lawyers believe that the Court should decide the cases on the basis of the issues and arguments presented by the parties. Far from being an example of an obsession with technicalities, White's opinion in the cross-burning case is an example of careful judicial temperament.

The last thing the Court needs is a scholar of the sort described by Rosen. The Court is a pragmatic institution that plays an incredibly important role in our democracy; it is not a playground for intellectual gymnastics.

ALLAN IDES
Professor of Law
Washington and Lee University
Lexington, Virginia

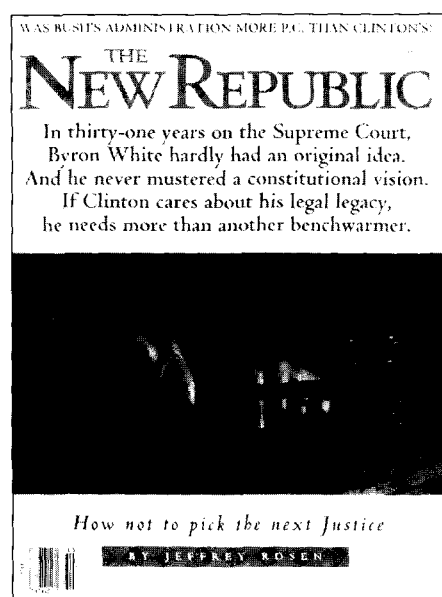
Bush's diversity factor

To the editors:

In "Unwhite House" (April 12) Ruth Shalit misquoted me to make her point that President Bush had "racial and gender quotas" that Bill Clinton is only copying. In the course of a long telephone interview, I made exactly the opposite case to her. At least twice I said, "Diversity should be a prime consideration in making appointments but never the prime consideration." This she deconstructed into a supposed statement by me that "diversity benchmarks became 'a prime consideration' in determining who got which job under Bush," implying that diversity was far more important to President Bush than it was or should be.

An appointee must rise or fall on two

things: an ability to accomplish his or her mission in the peculiar environment of official Washington and his or her loyalty to the president and the platform on which he was elected. Beyond this, diversity can be a plus for an administration and the country. That, in order, is what President Bush wanted from his appointees, and that is what he achieved. But he and his "management-minded underlings" never used a quota system to do this. Our standard was a single word: more. President Bush wanted more women and minorities in his administration than President Reagan had for the same reason Reagan wanted (and got) more than Nixon and Ford had: because an administration is strengthened by having in it more than the K-Street lobbying set.



Take the case of Antonia Coello Novello, who was U.S. surgeon general under President Bush. Dr. Novello is a world-recognized pediatrician who had risen to high rank in the Public Health Service long before the White House called her in 1989. She is a truly gifted public speaker who was tremendously loyal to President Bush and his policies. Was Novello's ethnic origin a consideration in her selection? Yes, because it was hoped (and amply shown) that in addition to performing the duties of a surgeon general she would be a symbol of hope and inspiration to the nation's Hispanics and a sign of President Bush's solidarity with Puerto Rico. These were perfectly legitimate considerations. But, to repeat, they were and always should be subsidiary to considerations of ability and loyalty.

By contrast, President Clinton has made diversity the most important factor in his appointments. In doing so, he practically yells that he is composing an

administration chiefly on the basis of chromosomes and pigment. I suspect that many a woman or minority named by him to some job has silently chafed under Clinton-style diversity, for he is pretty much saying that their ability and experience mattered less to him than their gender and skin color. This (as I again said more than once to Shalit) demeans the appointee and points out an essential difference between the two parties: that Democrats tend to see people as groups whereas Republicans tend to see them as individuals.

CHASE UNTERMEYER
Washington, D.C.

Ruth Shalit replies:

I quoted Untermeyer accurately. He said that diversity was never the "sole consideration" in staffing Bush's administration but that it was nevertheless a "prime consideration." He also described a complex apparatus of "negotiation and consultation and bargaining" used to produce "historic numbers" of minorities for the president.

Unconstitutional

To the editors:

I can understand Mickey Kaus's confession that he went through law school without ever reading *Roe v. Wade* (TRB, "Roe to Ruin," April 12), but is it possible that he never read the Constitution either? "One thing the Constitution *does* mention," he says, "is democracy." Could he tell us just where in the Constitution he found that?

ALLAN PESKIN
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Mickey Kaus replies:

You're kidding? The Constitution provides for a House and Senate chosen by "the people" (Article I and Amendment 17); guarantees each state a "Republican Form of Government" (Article IV); and makes numerous references to the "right to vote" (e.g., Amendments 14, 15, 19, 24 and 26). Representative democracy is still democracy.

Harper's Ferry, too

To the editors:

To complete the statistical record of Jewish behavior in the United States as noted in David Brion Davis's article "The Other Zion" (April 12), three Jewish men rode with John Brown to Harper's Ferry. That's not a statistic likely to be found in Leonard Jeffries's history of the Jews.

ROBERTA KALECHOFKY
Marblehead, Massachusetts

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FROM WASHINGTON

Morning-after Bill

"In his first two months as president, Bill Clinton has achieved a triumph of communications in the arena of public opinion. He has transformed himself from the very shaky winner ... into a very popular president whose mastery of the mass media has given him real leverage with which to govern."

David Broder of *The Washington Post* wrote that. Except, to tell the truth, he didn't write it about Bill Clinton. He wrote it sixteen years ago. I've substituted "Bill Clinton" for the name Broder actually used, which was "Jimmy Carter."

Nobody wants to make Broder's mistake this time around, so the rush is on among reporters to be skeptical of the new Democrat in the White House, to be the first to discover his peculiar defects. Joe Klein of *Newsweek* charges that Clinton "rolls out concepts, rather than fully gestated programs." In *Esquire*, Walter Shapiro sees Clinton's flaw as the hubris of the "smartest and most charming boy in the class who still believes he can pull off anything."

Is it too early for this sort of doubt-mongering? My colleague Michael Kinsley has written that cynicism about Clinton reflects the cowardly "fear of a mistaken swoon." Certainly Carter faced nothing like it. The public had to wait more than two years for the definitive exposure of his hamartia in a kiss-and-tell *Atlantic* piece by his speechwriter, James Fallows. Carter, Fallows said, saw the presidency as a multiple-choice exam. He thought in lists. He spent his time deciding who should use the White House tennis courts. (Fallows had the signed permission slips.) Suddenly it all became clear.

But maybe Carter would have been a better president if his weaknesses had been exposed earlier. And Clinton, perhaps more than Carter, responds to criticism—he flipped overnight when charged with distancing himself from the Waco disaster. Klein and Shapiro may have been telling him things Stephanopoulos doesn't dare. In that

constructive spirit, it's worth evaluating the leading nominees for the role of Clinton's Tragic Flaw, even adding a dark-horse contender or two. The candidates are:

He wants to be liked by too many people. So obviously true it's not worth discussing. Name an interest group, aside from drug companies and homophobes, that Clinton has seriously annoyed.

He's really an Old Democrat. Not so obviously true. Would an Old Democrat shave Social Security benefits through taxation? Name a Democratic interest group that Clinton has egregiously appeased.

He wants to do everything himself. Clinton doesn't supervise the tennis courts, but at the start of his term frustrated office-seekers complained that he wanted to personally pick every appointee. They're still complaining. Jeffrey Birnbaum of *The Wall Street Journal* followed Clinton around for a week and reported that he was immersing himself in such details as ... well, as the positioning of the Bradley fighting vehicles in Waco.

Hmmm. Perhaps this flaw needs recasting. Obviously the problem revealed by the Waco decision wasn't an urge to micromanage. Rather, Clinton appears to have placed too much faith in those below him in the chain of command, contenting himself with asking pointed questions of his attorney general. Charles Peters has called this reliance on cross-examination the Perry Mason Fallacy. Asking Janet Reno tough questions won't get at the truth if Reno isn't being given the full picture by her subordinates (who, in turn, may not be getting the truth from their subordinates). This sort of reliance on the chain of command is almost invariably fatal. It gave us the Bay of Pigs and Carter's Iranian rescue mission, not to mention much of the Vietnam War.

What's needed is some way of circumventing the command chain and getting information from the field. Were the FBI's fears about mounting abuses by David Koresh justified? "I have to take their word for that," Clinton asserted. No, he doesn't. Surely there is some trustworthy FOB he (or Reno) could have sent to Waco to make sure the FBI wasn't exaggerating the danger for bureaucratic reasons (say, because its agents wanted to go home).

He married Lady Macbeth. A popular criticism. I've made it myself. But note that Hillary Rodham Clinton's power is no longer exercised so secretly. She's taken on a large, public mission (health care reform) in which her every decision will be scrutinized. Also, it's hard to make the Hillary objection and the he-can't-delegate objection at the same time. He clearly knows how to delegate to Hillary.

He's still a governor. An unpopular criticism. Twelve years of Republican presidents have succeeded in making governors sexy, at least to journalists such as Broder and David Osborne. Governors, they tell us, have to run things. They balance budgets. As a result, they can't afford partisan rhetoric. They're innovative, post-ideological.

But they're also governors, and with that come limitations. Specifically, governors are not reasonably held accountable for the overall state of the economy. They don't control the macroeconomic levers. What voters do reasonably expect is that governors will do a lot of little microeconomic things (improve schools, retrain workers, build housing, lure businesses) that will make things a bit better than they would otherwise be.

I'm not saying that Clinton has the mindset of a Michael Dukakis, who seemed to feel that the president's job is to help the states steal businesses from each other. I am suggesting that Clinton seems to have an excessive affinity for lots of little programs that make things a little better. An incident from Birnbaum's piece sticks: Clinton is about to meet with (yes) Jimmy Carter. But before the meeting he pulls Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros aside and asks whether separate funding has been preserved for "the 202 program." Cisneros says yes. Clinton is genuinely pleased.

The 202 program? It gives money to nonprofit groups that build housing for the elderly poor. The key fact about the 202 program, however, is that this year, for \$1.45 billion, it will build a grand total of 9,115 units nationwide. It is, in terms of the health of the republic, completely unimportant. But it is the sort of nice little program to which a governor might point with pride at election time.

Too many of Clinton's initiatives seem to be on the verge of turning into 202 programs, reforms that will help a bit but won't come close to actually solving the problem at hand. National service has been scaled back into such a program. Welfare reform may wind up that way. Clinton's "stimulus" package was a bouquet of 202s.

True, in other areas of domestic policy—e.g., helping the working poor—Clinton has proposed changes that are more than ameliorative. Nor is this last flaw necessarily fatal. But if you combine it with Clinton's please-everybody tendency and his chain-of-command problem, you have more than enough trouble for one term. I don't want to be one of Kinsley's cowardly cynics. But I can worry, can't I?

MICKEY KAUS

MAY 10, 1993

STOP SERBIA NOW

At the beginning, there was confusion. A state that was not a state was cut loose from an empire and convulsed itself in ancient hatreds. A civil war or an ethnic implosion? A religious feud or an imbalance of power? The status of Bosnia was, after all, historically problematic. It was not a "nation" as such; and the Europeans, with a long history of caution in such matters, advised caution. Besides, were not all the parties—Croats, Muslims, Serbs—morally tainted?

So the United States, exhilarated by the end of the cold war and consumed with an election campaign in which the arguments of retrenchment outweighed the passion for entanglement, let it be. The Europeans revealed themselves to be Europeans, incapable of united action, guided by separate historic and cultural temperaments, fearful of the larger truths that the Serbian war revealed about Europe's intolerance of tolerance and addicted to the process of peace, which soon became the management of war. The United Nations, through its humanitarian efforts, indirectly facilitated the incursions of the Serbs, and by placing Western troops on the ground, provided a perfect excuse for the British and French to oppose military escalation. The U.N. thus assumed the role of the expeditor of invasion, escorting the evacuees, shepherding the wounded, ushering in the victors. They do not wish to resist the Serbian conquest, they wish only to take the pain out of it. They are the cleansers of the cleansing, struggling to believe in decency in the face of unvarnished evil.

There may have been a point when the United States, confronted by what seemed to be an intractable internecine war, was right to pretend to stay aloof. We say pretend, because the United States has long been indirectly involved in the war. By upholding the arms embargo against Bosnia, we engineered a one-sided massacre; by halfheartedly supporting the Vance-Owen plan, we allowed the Serbs diplomatic space in which to pursue their military aims; by the policy of food aid drops to those about to be slaughtered, we gave notice that we would do nothing to end the slaughter itself. Slobodan Milosevic, who follows the logic of force, rightly calculated that all the cards were his.

What we face now, however, is a new drama: the possibility not merely of new Serbian progress into Bosnian Muslim territory (and Macedonia and Kosovo), but the horrific possibility of genocide in those areas that the

Serbs already control. The threat is thus both moral and strategic. Those who argue that this region is of no strategic importance are simply wrong. The entanglement of Russia and Greece, the mobilization of Islamic states in defense of the Muslims, the destabilization of Turkey, the possibility of mass migration on the edge of Europe, all are threats to European stability as a whole. But the moral signal that is now being sent by the American government (which, in the other side of its brain, is busy congratulating itself for its ethical activism in Somalia) is even more worrying: that international borders are movable by force of arms; that racial and religious terror will go unchecked.

As so often before, the fixation on multilateralism is restraining credible action. The U.N. has shown itself to be toothless; the British and French are as pusillanimous now as they were in a far greater but similar crisis in the 1930s. Russia's Serbian sympathies preclude helping Bosnia. (There is something really unpleasant about this sudden renewal of the great Russian people's tenderness toward the great Serbian people. Is this what the end of the cold war was supposed to accomplish?) If the United States can only act in concert with other powers, it simply will not act at all.

So we must act alone; but we must act. President Clinton should deliver an ultimatum to Milosevic and his strutting surrogates: that, by a certain date, all incursions are to cease; that genocidal actions must immediately cease (including what might be called "strategic rape"); that negotiations should begin on constructing a defensible and credible Bosnian state out of the ruins of Bosnia-Herzegovina; and that, if these actions are not taken, the arms embargo on the Bosnians will be unilaterally lifted and unspecified military action against Serbian military targets from the air and sea will begin. This declaration should be made after the April 25 referendum in Russia and should be a unilateral declaration that can give Yeltsin complete deniability. (We owe Yeltsin that much in this matter, but not more.) If the Western allies and the U.N. can agree to this, so be it. But if they cannot, Clinton should summon the will to go ahead without them. There are times when America, alone of nations, has an obligation to take a stand, and act where the self-styled angels fear to tread. •



NOTEBOOK

CLINTONISM WATCH: "Of course, the president takes responsibility for what's done in his government, but it is under the operational control of the Justice Department." —George Stephanopoulos, April 19, (kind of) taking responsibility for the tragedy at Waco

NOT SO WACO: It's far too early to say what happened and what went wrong in the Waco, Texas, siege, but it's not too early to be dismayed by the insidious disparagement of religious life—even cultic religious life—by the media and politicians in the last few days. David Koresh was probably an extremist, an impostor and even possibly a murderer. But he was not a fool—and neither were his followers—for eschewing secular life as such. The president's disparagement of "religious fanatics" and the media's sympathy for the children involved (as if the adults too did not deserve pity) reflect a philistine suspicion of extreme religious existence, an intolerance toward the sometimes impenetrable demands of faith, that is not worthy of America. This is one of the very few countries where religions are still invented, where the discomfort with secular materialism becomes so great that it can spawn oddities such as the compound in Waco. And that is one of this country's strengths, not its weaknesses. In a legitimate excoriation of the religious hoaxes, we should be leery of being intolerant of much that revivifies and strengthens this country's spiritual existence.

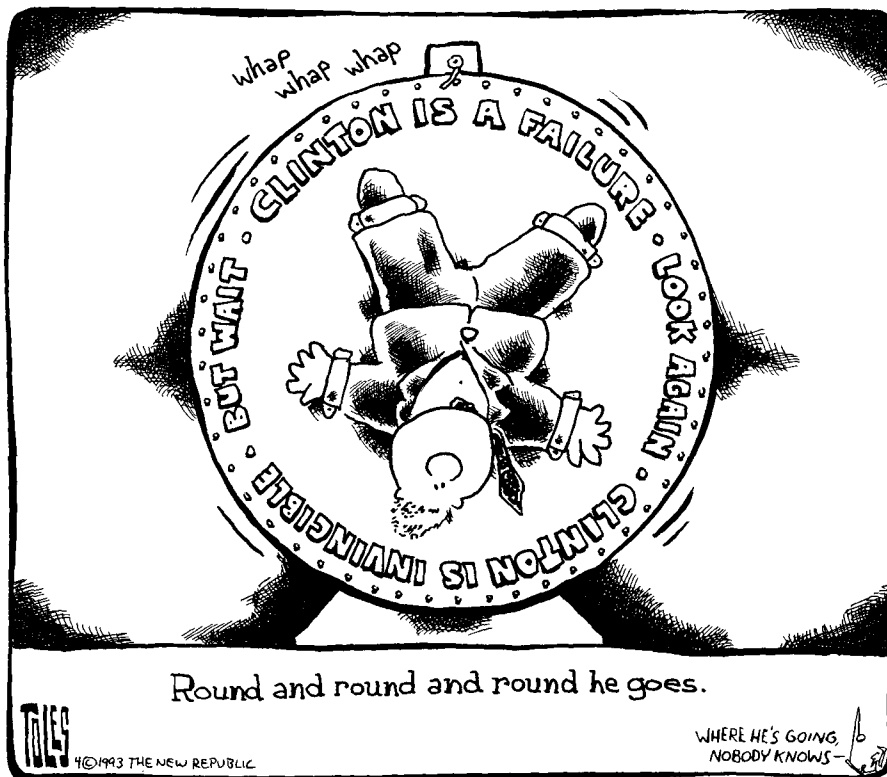
SIGNS OF THE TIMES: Newspaper "advertorials" have been getting a bit out of hand lately. It's one thing when *The New York Times* solicits ads for an insert on "Saudi Arabia, The Happy Kingdom" or some such

blather, but lately the paper has looked more and more as if its editorial positions on issues of the day are up for sale. Advertisers recently received a letter, on *New York Times* letterhead announcing that the paper was going to publish a series of special advertorials "in support of NAFTA." The first of these special supplements, which appeared on April 20, included contributions from Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and Special Trade Representative Mickey Kantor. In other words, the paper solicited articles from the White House, supporting what happens to be its own editorial position, which it then used to sell ads to private companies.

TRUTH HURTS: One reason why the U.N. Truth Commission report on atrocities in El Salvador has vanished from the headlines since its release on March 15 is that the U.N. is bungling its distribution as only the U.N. can. For a start, the report is available only in Spanish. Until someone gets around to a translation, English-speakers have to make do with an eleven-page summary (which the U.N. won't send by fax) of the commission's 874-page findings.

Copies of the full report cost \$75, and the publications office won't mail them out until they have the money in hand. The result, according to the publications office in Washington: only eleven copies of the report have been sent out.

ANYBODY'S GUEST: Last week we reported that among the invitees to the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was Franjo Tudjman, the president of Croatia, who questioned that 6 million Jews were killed and called the Jewish people "Judeo-Nazis." "Not clear whether he's planning to show up," we wrote. Update: he's here, planning to do the rounds of receptions at the museum, Arlington Cemetery, the State Department and the Rose Garden. •



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The NAACP's dead end.

BEN AGAIN

By W. Hampton Sides

Jesse Jackson, attempting to describe the predicament of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, whose top job he unsuccessfully campaigned for earlier this month, drew an analogy to Motown Records: "It has a well-known label and a great distribution system, but it needs a hit record."

The insinuation, of course, was that he would have delivered the hit. Certainly Jackson could have raised the profile of the organization, whose executive director, Benjamin L. Hooks, steps down on May 1. But the NAACP board was wise not to link the nation's oldest civil rights organization to Jackson's cult of personality. Jackson claims he withdrew his nomination to avoid "a fratricidal battle" over proposed constitutional amendments that would have weakened the director's powers. But according to a statement signed by three board members and released to the press, Jackson concocted this tale to save face when it became apparent that he didn't have the votes to win.

Instead, the NAACP board chose the Rev. Benjamin Chavis Jr. The 45-year-old civil rights activist, who served on the Clinton-Gore transition team, had campaigned assiduously for the job and wasted no time getting started. Right after his appointment, he parachuted into South-Central Los Angeles to ride out the King verdicts in front of the cameras. On the eve of his trip, Chavis set an apocalyptic tone on the "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour." "I'm going to stay in the hood," he said. "I'm going to be with those young brothers and sisters while they're being encircled right now." Chavis roamed public housing projects in his blue NAACP windbreaker, conferring with crack heads and gang bangers. He insisted on dignifying last year's L.A. riots by repeatedly referring to them on television and radio as an "urban rebellion."

Say this for Chavis: he showed up. And at least he had the good sense to listen to people on the streets. The Hooks style would have been to fly in after the fact and maunder to a chorus of grayhairs at some local church. In a single weekend Chavis managed to garner more press for the media-starved NAACP than Hooks generated in a year. But it's indicative of the NAACP's advanced stage of headline anemia that just getting noticed has become one of its chief ends.

In some ways, Chavis seems the predictable successor to Hooks, another Southern preacher steeped in the

homilies of *The Struggle*. Like Hooks, Chavis has two titles, which he dons tactically: he's "Dr." when he wants to appeal to a listener's intellect, "the Reverend" when he hopes to win over heart and soul. But in fact Chavis's background differs dramatically from that of Hooks. Chavis comes out of the United Church of Christ, a predominantly white denomination based in Cleveland. Perhaps as a result, he seems more nimble at framing issues in a white perspective. "I have the capacity to talk to whites about racial justice [in a way] that does not frighten them to death," Chavis recently told the *L.A. Times*. He can also speak to Latinos; Chavis is fluent in Spanish (his wife is from the Dominican Republic).

Something else distinguishes Chavis from Hooks: Chavis has done hard time. As the leader of the famed Wilmington Ten, a group of activists who were convicted in the 1972 firebombing of a white-owned grocery store in North Carolina, he was sentenced to thirty-four years in prison. He served four before he was exonerated by the federal courts. Chavis used his time in prison to study Greek and acquire a masters of divinity from Duke University. The crucible of his prison experience has earned him a certain stature amid the gang culture of the inner cities, a street credibility that Hooks never had. But it also seems to have ingrained in him a deep-seated victimology, a sense of the nobility of helplessness and suffering. "Blessed are thy people who cry/who moan and groan for relief in the struggle for liberation," Chavis wrote in his 1983 book *Psalms from Prison*, which he says he scribbled on toilet paper in his cell. The book is full of lamentations for the "meek" and "downtrodden," and predictable jeremiads against capitalist "imperialists."

Chavis has proved singularly adept at pitching battles that don't amount to much. In 1987 he was arrested in Brooklyn along with Al Sharpton and dozens of others after participating in a "Day of Outrage" against racism. The group halted subway service at the downtown Brooklyn IRT station by pulling the emergency ripcords, forcing open the train doors and jumping onto the subway tracks. Chavis was also involved in an acrimonious month-long protest against *The Washington Post* in 1986; picketers argued that articles in the inaugural issue of the paper's Sunday magazine depicted negative black stereotypes. Recently Chavis has trained his sights on normalizing relations with Angola, to no great effect.

Chavis is best known, however, for championing the fight against "environmental racism." He asserts that there has been a "deliberate targeting of people of color communities for toxic waste facilities." Although minority neighborhoods have unfairly borne the burden of industrial dumps, many studies indicate this is mostly a function of class, not race. Chavis conveniently ignores the scores of examples of toxic dumps located in poor white neighborhoods, such as Love Canal, adopting instead such phrases as "radioactive colonialism."

It was a plangent irony that Thurgood Marshall passed away during the NAACP's search for a new director, for his death marked the passing of an era. As the

organization's special counsel in the '40s and '50s, Marshall represented the NAACP's finest moment. During Marshall's era, the movement was imbued with a moral clarity that is lacking today. The evils were stark and obvious: Bull Connor, the firehose and the thousand indignities of Jim Crow. Today, NAACP lawyers ponder such matters as glass ceilings, affirmative action and the arcane details of redistricting.

As the skirmishes have become more marginal, the NAACP has increasingly alienated white allies who feel the organization celebrates black victimization by hectoring the government for special treatment, and who wish it would spend more time addressing the social pathologies of black America. The NAACP has yet to fully acknowledge that such problems as teenage pregnancy, gang feuds, single-parent households and welfare dependency pose greater obstacles to "the advancement of colored people" than the Klan. But Chavis's rhetoric reflects none of this. In fact, he seems to preach the opposite. He says he wants to make "unemployment and the economy civil rights issues."

Chavis has pledged to make the NAACP a "vibrant organization for all our people, from African-American professionals on Wall Street to the despairing and alienated masses in our inner cities." But black America is too large and too heterogeneous for a single ambassador to articulate its hopes and concerns with any real force. The NAACP has ironically been weakened by the very success of blacks that the organization has helped nurture. Today there are so many other meaningful positions of authority from which blacks can speak that an NAACP "policy statement" on a given issue seems passé. Why bother listening to Ben Chavis, when you can go to Colin Powell, Tom Bradley or Marian Wright Edelman?

Chavis says he wants to put the NAACP in a "new frame of reference." So far he has unveiled a few superficial modern touches (an NAACP rap anthem is apparently in the works). But he has offered little hint that he intends to change the NAACP's central mission. It would be heartening to see the NAACP combine its litigation and lobbying strategies with a pinch of honest introspection and, wherever possible, an ethic of self-reliance. Yet last week Chavis reiterated the familiar lines—of black helplessness and white blame, of redemption through massive social spending, of what the government owes. "Full justice, for us, is jobs, health care, childhood uplift and economic development," Chavis said on "Face the Nation," warning that if Clinton's jobs package didn't pass on the Hill it would be a long hot summer of unrest. In his meetings last week with gang members and acknowledged looters from the '92 riots, he never found an occasion to suggest that in the grand scheme of our nation's social malaise, they may have some responsibility for the problem too.

W. HAMPTON SIDES is author of *Stomping Grounds: A Pilgrim's Progress Through Eight American Subcultures* (Morrow).

VERRETTES POSTCARD

THE WAITING

By Anna Husarska

While in Port-au-Prince, I heard on the radio that a man had been arrested in the town of Verrettes after the police searched his house, supposedly looking for a cache of arms. Instead, all they found was a cassette tape of a Creole news service and an almanac detailing the history of human rights in Haiti. They hauled him off anyway. A few days later I set off to Verrettes with another journalist and two photographers.

Back in the capital, negotiations were under way to restore President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was ousted in September 1991. If no deal was reached and pressure from the United States was not effective, there might be further bloodshed. After all, the one word Haitians have contributed to the international political vocabulary is *dechoukaj*, the violent, systematic "uprooting" of the people from the ancien régime by the people from the nouveau régime.

For violence is not a possibility in Haiti today; it is a reality. And it is not merely an easily thwarted bunch of thugs blocking the restoration of democracy, but a total lawlessness and anarchy. The sheriffs, called *chefs de section*, have absolute power over their subjects, especially in the countryside. The arrest in Verrettes seemed to be a case in point.

On the way there we passed through St. Marc, a town seventy miles north of Port-au-Prince, where the night before, Aristide supporters—taking advantage of the blackout and possibly the increased presence of the international human rights observers—wrote new graffiti demanding his return and constructed barricades of burning tires. But by the time we arrived, the graffiti had been painted over and there was no trace of barricades. An attempt to chat at the post office and with a soda vender on the street led nowhere: in the daylight people are obviously scared to speak with foreigners. Fortunately, a friendly Swiss priest a few miles outside of St. Marc gave us the name of a colleague in Verrettes, so at least we knew whom to look up.

Verrettes is a small town in the Artibonite, the central region of Haiti, known for its pro-Aristide sympathies. As we drove on the bumpy road to the town and stopped along the way, we encountered vaguely curious looks and complaints about the economic situation, but no terse words about politics or human rights. The presbytery in Verrettes was easy to find; it is next to the immense church overlooking a once picturesque, now deserted

square. Father Pierre Salvetti invited us in.

Very soft-spoken and matter-of-fact, he offered us lemonade, took out his French notebook (he is from south Corsica and favors stationery from the old country, although he has been living in Haiti for twenty years) and gave us a very precise account of the recent events in the region. Two common crimes had been committed in the vicinity of Verrettes that would have been of no consequence if it were not for the wave of arrests that followed. The *chefs de section* began a massive extortion operation in the area under the pretext of conducting an investigation into the crimes. According to one peasant who came to inform the priest and who shared the information with us, more than 200 people had been arrested, forced to pay money and later released.

At this point in his tale, Father Salvetti, who was slowly losing his temper, exploded. He started to scream with indignation, banging his fist on the table and making the lemonade glasses (and us) tremble: "At the time when President Aristide gives the military an amnesty, those here attack the most defenseless people! And nobody knows about it! Who can monitor all that? Port-au-Prince is the theater where they negotiate, where the attention is concentrated, but the real mirror of Haiti is the countryside!"

Three Haitian peasants, two men and a woman, joined us around the table. They spoke calmly and looked totally broken. Both men were on the run, afraid of being arrested. The timing of the round-up was particularly unfortunate for them, because this is the season for preparing fields to plant beans. The raids, not coincidentally, came right after the peasants had borrowed money to buy seeds and fertilizers.

One man, Laurent, and the young woman, Telia, then started giving other examples of the regular extortion to which they are subject. They must pay *chefs de section* \$15 when they have a wedding or when a child is born; a head of cattle killed for food costs a ransom of \$3, a goat or a pig is \$1. Those who resist paying are threatened or arrested, so everyone pays.

The big hope for these peasants and for all victims of human rights violations in Haiti are the foreigners in dark blue T-shirts. Huge white letters on the front and back of the shirts identify them as representatives of the OEA, which is French for OAS, or Organization of American States. They are human rights monitors from the U.N./OAS joint mission. In the countryside, their presence is expected to curtail extortion and violence by the *chefs de section*. More than 100 observers are now in Haiti, some of them already deployed in the provinces, others still being briefed in Port-au-Prince about the history and culture of the country, about the political situation and about the use of walkie-talkies.

Meanwhile violations of human rights continue. Stopping them all (or even observing them all) would require thousands of observers driving white four-wheel-drive trucks, carrying gray walkie-talkies and scribbling in thick yellow legal pads day and night. A remark that I heard in Sarajevo from a U.N. peacekeeper comes to mind: "All I can do is poke the delinquent with my pen

and say 'naughty boy.'" Of course, observing is better than not observing, but unless there is some way of implementing law and order, the *chefs de section* will continue running their turf like private fiefdoms.

From the presbytery we went to the police station. Alongside the path leading from the road to the rather shabby-looking barracks was an old cannon. It was aimed directly at us. The officer who greeted us, half asleep and fumbling for his socks, assured us that everything was under control in Verrettes. Perhaps there had been some crime recently, but the investigation was under way. Many arrests? I asked. No, six suspects, all released. No bail? No, no bail was necessary. I asked his name. "Soldat Petitclair Dardesse," he answered, and then warned me that he could not give me any information without a permit from the headquarters in Port-au-Prince (four hours away).

Listening to the extortion tales in the presbytery and and the "all quiet on the Verrettes front" tales at the police station, I wondered what difference an observer would make here, even if a mission were to be located in Verrettes itself. They could observe, describe the acts in a report, express their indignation. But without a thorough reform of the police and the military structure, there is no way of thwarting corruption.

Back in Port-au-Prince I spoke with a Haitian human rights activist who was very skeptical of the foreign observers mission: they cannot prevent anything, he said. The diplomats were in his opinion too careful, too cautious, to deal with state terrorism or protect the defenseless population. Meanwhile from Washington came the news that should the military rule end in Haiti, the Clinton administration tentatively plans to send down a small team of military advisers "who would endeavor to instill democratic ideas in the Haitian armed forces" and professionalize the police. Seen from Verrettes, such plans appear very ambitious indeed. •

COURT WATCH

THE LIST

By Jeffrey Rosen

The White House has expanded its search for the next Supreme Court justice; and it is now possible to evaluate the scholarship, opinions and constitutional vision of the candidates. All are able federal judges. But some are more proficient than others at textual and historical analysis, and so better equipped to win over the swing justices and to challenge the Court's most aggressive intellectual, Antonin Scalia, on his own terms. In ascending order:

On Health Care Reform...

We Agree with America's Governors.

*We believe in
immediate and
fundamental reform
of America's
health care system.*



*That's why we join the
National Governors' Association
and many others
in endorsing
"managed competition"
as the best way to
restructure that system.*



*We are working with
the President, the Congress,
our nation's Governors
and others to make
"managed competition"
a reality.*



*We believe in
fundamental change.*

- ◆ Cover pre-existing conditions.
- ◆ Coverage must be portable.
- ◆ No cancellation due to illness.
- ◆ Choice of providers.
- ◆ Comprehensive benefits package.
- ◆ Certify health plans on ability to control costs.
- ◆ Establish real quality standards for providers.
- ◆ Purchasing pools for small business.
- ◆ Stiffen penalties for health care fraud.
- ◆ Immunize America's children.
- ◆ Reduce unnecessary paperwork.
- ◆ Expand preventive care.
- ◆ Enact medical malpractice reform.
- ◆ Cover all low-income Americans.

THE ALLIANCE FOR MANAGED COMPETITION

Providing Health Coverage for 60 Million Americans

AETNA

CIGNA

METLIFE

THE PRUDENTIAL

THE TRAVELERS

Mary M. Schroeder, 52. U.S. Court of Appeals, Phoenix, Arizona. According to Ninth Circuit legend, Schroeder was a reliable liberal in criminal cases until she was mugged near the steps of the U.S. courthouse; she then became more moderate. She tends to avoid the partisan squabbles that have divided the circuit. Instead, her passion is for efficiency: her liberal colleague, Stephen Reinhardt, reportedly accused her of "numbers fetishism" when she calculated that the Fifth Circuit processes cases more quickly than the Ninth. Schroeder's most important opinion, *Flores v. Meese* (1991), struck down the INS's policy of detaining the children of aliens in prison camps until their relatives claimed them. Unfortunately, Schroeder's reasoning was so muddled that several of her allies were forced to write separate concurrences; the Supreme Court, 7-2, reversed the decision last month. If she has an overarching constitutional vision, it is difficult to detect.

Amalya L. Kearse, 55. U.S. Court of Appeals, New York City. According to another legend, more likely apocryphal, Kearse was introduced to Nathaniel Jones, a Cincinnati appellate judge and former civil rights lawyer. "Can you bring me up to speed on Section 10b(5)?"—a key provision in corporate law—asked Jones. "Yes," Kearse supposedly replied, "if you'll bring me up to speed on section 1983"—a key provision in civil rights law. As the anecdote suggests, it is not clear why Clinton, who values life experience so highly, would be drawn to a competent corporate lawyer. Although colleagues speak generously of her lack of "partisan affiliation," rumors persist that the Carter appointee may be a moderate Republican. Her opinions, like her manner on the bench, are careful and reserved.

Stephanie K. Seymour, 52. U.S. Court of Appeals, Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Tenth Circuit is among the most collegial of circuits; and though Seymour is one of only two consistent liberals, she has a good record of getting along with her more conservative colleagues. A former Tulsa lawyer and author of a book about public housing in Waterbury, Connecticut, she has distinguished herself as an aggressive questioner. Her opinions reflect case-by-case realism more than an overarching philosophy, but she showed an expansive streak in a 1990 decision declaring that it is cruel and unusual punishment to put non-smoking prisoners in the same cell as smokers. Although she stands out on the Tenth Circuit, Seymour has not, over the past fifteen years, developed a national reputation.

José A. Cabranes, 52. U.S. District Court, New Haven, Connecticut. A photograph of Roger Baldwin, founder of the ACLU, is framed in his home study; but in some cases Cabranes's instincts appear to be more pro-government than libertarian. In a 1982 article, Cabranes criticized William Rehnquist and William Brennan for encouraging courts to rely on state constitutions. Federal judges should not forsake their responsibility to protect individual rights, Cabranes argued, and

"national needs must be met by national action." At the same time, Cabranes has called the federal sentencing guidelines a "dismal failure" because of their effort to impose a national policy on federal judges. In 1988 Cabranes tried to strike down the sentencing guidelines as a violation of the separation of powers. Cabranes's main scholarly work is *Citizenship and the American Empire*, a study of the Jones Act of 1917, which made Puerto Ricans American citizens.

Richard S. Arnold, 57. U.S. Court of Appeals, Little Rock, Arkansas. In addition to being Clinton's closest friend on the federal bench, the chief judge of the Eighth Circuit is, objectively, a star. A former candidate for Congress and legislative assistant to Senator Dale Bumpers, Arnold has written two serious law review articles arguing that state courts should have the power to enjoin federal officers who violate federal constitutional rights. Women's groups have already targeted a 1983 opinion in which Arnold refused to apply a Minnesota sex discrimination statute to the U.S. Jaycees. Arnold held—plausibly, at least—that the law violated the Jaycee's First Amendment right to freedom of association; but he was reversed by the Supreme Court, in an opinion written by his former boss, Brennan. Arnold was less of a textualist in a 1990 dissent, arguing expansively that "the right to name one's child" should be covered by the right to privacy.

Stephen G. Breyer, 54. U.S. Court of Appeals, Boston. The chief judge of the First Circuit has taught antitrust, administrative law and economic regulation at Harvard since 1965. He became a protégé of Senator Edward Kennedy as chief counsel of the Judiciary Committee, where he won the trust of Senate Republicans and helped build a political coalition for airline deregulation. A forthcoming book will address the problems of regulating health risks. The most powerful theme that runs throughout Breyer's writing is pragmatism. He has defended the use of legislative history, and the Sentencing Guidelines (which he helped to draft), on the grounds that law is "properly subject to praise, or to criticism, in terms of certain pragmatic values." At the same time, he is capable of rigorous textual analysis, as he showed in a 1983 case—unconvincingly reversed by Rehnquist—in which Breyer held that the Reagan administration's restrictions on travel to Cuba violated Congress's intentions.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, 60. U.S. Court of Appeals, Washington, D.C. "If you had to spend the rest of your life on a desert island with Laurence Tribe or Mario Cuomo, which would you choose?" Antonin Scalia was asked at a recent lunch with clerks at the federal courthouse in Washington. "Ruth Bader Ginsburg," Scalia replied. Scalia's esteem for Ginsburg is hardly based on political agreement; for Ginsburg can plausibly be described as the Thurgood Marshall of the women's rights movement. She was the first woman appointed professor of law at Columbia; and as the general counsel of the ACLU's Woman Right's Project from 1972-80,

she persuaded the Supreme Court, in six landmark oral arguments, to grant heightened constitutional scrutiny for gender discrimination. Ginsburg also supplied the (controversial) constitutional arguments for extending the ratification deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment. Along with Patricia Wald—who turns 65 this year and appears to be under less serious consideration because of her age—Ginsburg has become the most respected judge on the D.C. Circuit. But she is considered slightly more moderate than Wald, who puts less emphasis on collegiality. Although firmly pro-choice on abortion, Ginsburg has an intelligently nuanced view about the constitutional issue posed by *Roe v. Wade*. In her Madison lecture at New York University last month, she argued that the Court should have simply struck down the extreme anti-abortion law presented in *Roe*, rather than create a rigid set of rules that displaced every state abortion law in the nation and choked off the legislative momentum in favor of liberalization. *Roe* might have been less controversial, Ginsburg argued, if it had invoked the reasoning of the gender discrimination cases: “disadvantageous treatment of a woman because of her pregnancy and reproductive choice is a paradigm case of discrimination on the basis of sex.”

Of all the candidates, Ginsburg is the most respected both by liberals and conservatives. Her scrupulous position on *Roe* represents Clinton’s best opportunity to cut the Gordian knot of the litmus test; and she is the candidate most likely to win over the swing justices in memos and at conference. The only concern about Ginsburg is that she might become *too* friendly with the mushy middle. But although she has been willing to compromise on minor details, her core positions—on broad access to the courts, freedom of religion and speech and gender equality—are models of principled liberalism. Her nomination would be one of the most acclaimed since Felix Frankfurter, who turned Ginsburg down for a clerkship in 1960 on the grounds that he wasn’t ready for a woman. Now, we are. •

Gays in the military, 300 B.C.

BATTLE-WORN

By John Boswell

The most counterintuitive aspect of ancient same-sex eroticism is not its frequency, which is well known, but its long and hallowed relationship to democracy and military valor. Modern military officials tend to find this improbable or even unbelievable. But since sexual orientation was a matter

of minor public and ethical concern to most of the city-states of the ancient world, and citizenship was a crucial privilege and obligation of all adult male citizens, many persons who might now be considered “gay” played prominent roles in the military, taking part in the earliest form of democracy through such involvement. A majority of the population of any ancient city-state—women, slaves, non-citizens—could not serve in the army; but they were not voting citizens anyway. Ancient city-states maintained the belief that all those who benefited from the state had an obligation to defend it.

The association of homosexuals with democracy and the military was intense and widespread, extending from Harmodius and Aristogiton, a pair of lovers who were believed to have founded the Athenian democracy by concerted violence against the last tyrant, who tried to come between them, to the noted generals Pelopidas and Epaminondas, to the great military genius Alexander and his male lover Bagoas.

Of Harmodius and Aristogiton, no less acute a mind than Plato’s observed that

our own tyrants learned this lesson through bitter experience, when the love between Aristogiton and Harmodius grew so strong that it shattered their power. Wherever, therefore, it has been established that it is shameful to be involved in sexual relationships with men, this is due to evil on the part of the rulers, and to cowardice in the part of the governed.

In the same *Symposium* Phaedrus argued that no one’s behavior is better than that of those who are in love (with other men), because they would rather behave badly in sight of father or comrade than in view of those they love. He even advanced the idea that

if we could somehow contrive to have a city or an army composed of lovers and those they loved, they could not be better citizens of their country than by thus refraining from all that is base in a mutual rivalry for honor; and such men as these, when fighting side by side, one might almost consider able to make even a little band victorious over all the world. For a man in love would surely choose to have all the rest of the host rather than the one he loves see him forsaking his station or flinging away his arms; sooner than this, he would prefer to die many deaths: while, as for leaving the one he loves in the lurch, or not succoring him in peril, no man is such a craven that the influence of Love cannot inspire him with a courage that makes him equal to the bravest born; and without doubt what Homer calls a “fury inspired” by a god in certain heroes is the effect produced on lovers by Love’s peculiar power.

Moreover, only such as are in love will consent to die for others.

Perhaps inspired by this recommendation (although it merely expressed common sense in relation to the social relations of men in antiquity), about twenty years later (378 B.C.) the Theban leader Gorgidas did create such a company of 300 men, composed of pairs of lovers. They were known as the “sacred band” of Thebes, because, as Plutarch later explained, “even Plato calls the lover a friend ‘inspired of God.’” Living long after, Plutarch was in a position to know that the troop had played a crucial role in many military engagements,

Gay glue

If they want to play at politics, postmodern gays must decide whether to sign on as a gender or an ethnicity.

Unfortunately, neither model fits. Every gay person already has both a gender and an ethnicity, and the gay experience lies somewhat outside both. That's one reason a word like "queer" is appealing: it draws attention to the obstinate privacy of gay experience, its resistance to other categories. The activist-mandarins have slated "queer" to replace "gay," just as "gay" has replaced "homosexual," and this new label has the advantage of making assimilation into any familiar model of identity more difficult. It declares that we're outsiders—always have been, always will be.

Permanent outsider status, however, also makes politics more difficult. The youngest of the prominent gay rights groups calls itself Queer Nation, but "queer" and "nation," as words and as ideas, are at odds with each other. How can a queer nation stick together? A queer is turned inward; he's something of an idiot in the old Greek sense—a person who by definition abstains from the civic realm. What kind of political structure could unite a group of people who define themselves by a perverse insistence on the individuality of their desires?

This is not a new question. In fact, it's the same question that America, as a national experiment, is supposed to answer: how to assemble a nation out of millions of individuals busy protecting their private lives and liberties and pursuing their particular happinesses. In James Madison's words, a "zeal for different opinions" is inevitable. The challenge is "to break and control the violence of faction" without impeding liberty. Faced with the paradox of a nation based on individual rights, Madison helped engineer a political solution—the Constitution—but not a psychological one. The Federalists said nothing about what that queer but newly nationalized animal, the American, would *feel* like. That was a job for poets. And not until the middle of the nineteenth century did a "Chanter of Personality" arrive to tackle the problem.

In Walt Whitman's lifetime, the "violence of faction" that had worried Madison blossomed into civil war. Like Madison, Whitman saw the American

identity caught between two poles:

Must not the virtue of modern Individualism, continually enlarging, usurping all, seriously affect, perhaps keep down entirely, in America, the like of the ancient virtue of Patriotism, the fervid and absorbing love of general country?

But where Madison had answered with politics, Whitman offered emotion. The accord between "ensemble-Individuality" and "special Personalism," to use Whitman's idiosyncratic terms, was prophesied in a vision of a nation bound by love.

"Be not dishearten'd," Whitman proclaimed; "affection shall solve the problems of freedom yet." In a poem titled "For You O Democracy," he boasted, "Come, I will make the continent indissoluble." But Whitman's expansive, unifying love had a slant to it. "I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each other's necks, / By the love of comrades, / By the manly love of comrades." It was the love of men for men that would cohere the nation—a lubricant fit to ease no less a friction than the Civil War. Today's Queer Nationals may be content to take as their mission gay self-empowerment, but if they decide to look beyond this, they might take heart in a moment in America's ideological history when queer love seemed to be a force that could transform and save the whole country.

For Whitman, male-male love was the answer to the question American identity posed. "I say democracy infers such loving comradeship, as its most inevitable twin or counterpart, without which it will be incomplete, in vain, and incapable of perpetuating itself." This love crossed lines of class, race and region.

It's probably no coincidence that the great poet of American selfhood also celebrated "the dear love of comrades." The poetic self and sexuality are the two great luxuries of identity indulged by prosperous industrializing democracies. What's odd is that he had the intellectual flexibility to associate the two so freely. As any Foucauldian could tell you, before homosexuality was either an ethnicity or a gender, it was a disease. And before it was a disease, it was a crime. And before it was a crime, it was a sin. Where, along this continuum, did Whitman fall?

The answer is, he didn't. Whitman saw male-male love through the lens of phrenology, a pseudo-science wildly popular in the nineteenth century.

Phrenologists divided the brain into thirty-seven organs, with names like "combateness" and "amativeness," that corresponded to personality traits. A highly combative person, for example, would have an unusually large organ of combateness, which would raise that area of his skull. An outline of your character could be read by an analysis of the bumps on your head.

Whitman was an enthusiastic phrenologist. He had his head examined at the New York Phrenological Cabinet of Fowlers & Wells, which later acted as publishers for *Leaves of Grass*. And he borrowed heavily from phrenology's vocabulary. Adhesiveness was the organ of friendship above and behind the ear, located between cautiousness and inhabitiveness—a perfectly innocuous and healthy bump for any skull to have. Whitman adapted adhesiveness to stand for something like the modern word homosexuality (not yet coined), free of medical or religious stigma. In Whitman's political schema, adhesiveness is the counterbalance to American individualism; it "fuses, ties and aggregates, making the races comrades, and fraternizing all." As he chants in his "Song of the Open Road":

Here is adhesiveness, it is not previously fashion'd, it is apropos;
Do you know what it is as you pass to be loved by strangers?
Do you know the talk of those turning eye-balls?

The bump of adhesiveness has migrated. Today the neurobiologist Simon LeVay posits that gay men have larger nodules in their anterior hypothalamuses than straight men do. Anterior hypothalamuses are less poetic, I think, but the principle is more or less the same. Medicine again offers to define us as a bump rather than as a disease.

Maybe now, then, is the time to recuperate Whitman's adhesive nation. Unfortunately, our world is divided against itself in new ways: as the critic Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has pointed out, the nineteenth century's continuous spectrum of male-male relationships has split into modern homosexuality and homophobia. But maybe it is again possible to hope that the love of men for men, and women for women, can help heal the rifts in a multicultural, democratic society.

CALEB CRAIN

Caleb Crain is a graduate student in English at Columbia University.

including Tegyra in 375 and Leuctra in 371, and

was never beaten, until the battle of Chacronea [338 B.C.]; and when, after the battle, Philip—of Macedon, who won the battle—was surveying the dead, and stopped at the place where the 300 were lying, all where they had faced the long spears of his phalanx, with their armor, and mingled one with another, he was amazed, and on learning that this was the band of lovers, burst into tears and said: "Perish miserably they who think that these men did or suffered aught disgraceful."

Much later, in the third century of the Christian era, Athenaeus would echo the idea that young men become exceptionally brave under the influence of love for each other, and added that "this was proved, at any rate, by the Sacred Band organized at Thebes."

The idea that same-sex relationships would compromise the masculinity of military personnel and introduce morale problems is so fixed and unquestionable in the modern U.S. military establishment that this idealization of homosexual relationships in warrior societies may seem preposterous. And some thought it so in ancient times as well. Philip was aware of a contrary prejudice and condemned it vehemently when confronted with the dazzling courage of the Sacred Band. "It is not only the most warlike peoples, Boeotians, Spartans, Cretans, who are the most susceptible to [this kind of] love," noted Plutarch in recording Philip's opinion, "but also the greatest heroes of old: Meleager, Achilles, Aristomenes, Cimon, Epaminondas. Epaminondas, in fact, loved two men, Asopichus and Caphisodorus. The latter died with him at Mantinea and is buried close to him." In his "Life of Pelopidas"—a great military hero even among warlike peoples—Plutarch adds that "Ioläus, who shared the labors of Hercules and fought by his side, was beloved of him. And Aristotle says that even down to his day [fourth century B.C.E.] the tomb of Ioläus was a place where same-sex lovers plighted mutual faith."

In the *Symposium* Plato also cites the eagerness of the great warrior Achilles to join his military comrade Patroclus in death as an explicit parallel to a wife's being willing to die for her husband. Their bones were burned and mixed together in a golden amphora, as was often done in the case of married heterosexual couples.

Plato had also put in the mouth of Aristophanes in the *Symposium* the idea that those males who preferred other males and "delight to lie with them and to be clasped in men's embraces ... are the finest boys and young men, for they have the most manly nature.... Their behavior is due to daring, manliness and virility, since they are quick to welcome their like."

Romans knew such same-sex hero couples—part of their cultural heritage—and added to them the *Aeneid's* Nisus and Euryalis, a pair of soldiers in the army of Aeneas, who were greatly devoted to each other. In a crucial foot race, Nisus, "remembering the love of Euryalis," essentially threw the race in his favor. The latter, moved by this gesture of love, demanded that Nisus nonetheless receive a prize, which Aeneas granted him.

Nisus later begged to be killed in Euryalis's place when the latter was in mortal danger; but instead *both* were slain. Vergil called them both blessed—*fortunati ambo*—and vowed that their devotion would be remembered as long as his poetry.

Hadrian and Antinous—the former one of the most effective commanders of the Roman army and the most outstanding of the so-called "five good emperors"—were among the best known and most romantically idealized couples of antiquity. Statuary of Antinous survives in great abundance, and games and cities were established in his honor after his untimely death. "The loftiest and most typical development of the Hadrianic period was the creation of the character of Antinous"—an attachment that no one at the time believed brought Hadrian's masculine or military character into any question.

After the collapse of ancient city-states, however, the ideal of military service for the entire citizenry disappeared. In the Middle Ages, military service in the form of knighthood was possible for (and required of) only the aristocratic followers of great landowners. Most of the males were servile and would not have been welcomed to knighthood. Apart from Joan of Arc, women almost never played any military role. Nonetheless, throughout European history an association of military virility and homosexual attachment was common. Richard LionHeart and Philip II of France, noted warriors of the twelfth century, were lovers and went on crusade together.

Knighly military service as an aspiration for the well-born declined in the later Middle Ages, largely disappeared in the Renaissance and was ultimately replaced by the great mercenary armies of early modern Europe, unrestrained by notions of chivalry or knighthood, who terrorized the entire continent with internecine fighting during Spain's efforts to rule all of Europe or the continent-wide bloodshed following the Protestant Reformation.

Nonetheless, even in the seventeenth century great military figures were often homosexual. Louis XIV was willing to overlook the flagrant homosexuality of the Maréchal de Vendôme—who paid his male servants to have sex with him when he rode about his estate—because the Maréchal was such a fine general. Louis's brother, Philippe, the duke of Orléans, was one of the founding members of a secret society of military men at the court of the Sun King. Its members took an oath to forswear the company of women and to limit their erotic interests to other members of the society. Though Louis was well aware of this, he declined to take action against his brother, whose influence and military genius he feared. Two princes of the royal family joined (the Comte de Vermandois, the admiral of France, and the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, who was elected king of Poland); the society was not disbanded until 1682.

The rise of modern nation-states with a new notion of universal conscription linked to general citizenship also included many homosexuals before the middle of the twentieth century, when a general horror of homosexu-

ality as a psychological defect settled on the English-speaking nations of the world. It is not easy to recover records from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when both Europe and the United States had such severe laws against homosexual activity that few people had the courage to leave records that would incriminate them. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that a European homosexual rights movement appeared, led by sex researchers of the time, but it was brutally exterminated (along with Jews and other non-conformists) by the Nazis.

By the time of World War I, American horror had reached such a pitch that active efforts were made to find, expose and punish homosexuals, of which there turned out to be many in the military. A scandal about homosexual behavior between sailors and local civilians erupted in Newport, Rhode Island, but was ultimately quashed due to the efforts of local clergymen. World War II, a much wider draft, initiated into homosexual relationships many men who would otherwise have lived in rural areas ignorant of the varieties of human sexuality.

As is widely recognized even by opponents of admitting homosexuals openly to the U.S. military, gay and lesbian soldiers have served faithfully and courageously in every conflict since World War II. There is, in other words, an ancient correlation not only of military service and homosexuality, but of democracy in particular with military service on the part of all citizens, which extends from ancient history to the present day. It is perhaps time that one of the leading modern democracies in the world recognized it.

JOHN BOSWELL is A. Whitney Griswold professor of history at Yale University.

Homosexuals and victimology.

BEYOND OPPRESSION

By Jonathan Rauch

At 10:30 on a weeknight in the spring of 1991, Glenn Cashmore was walking to his car on San Diego's University Avenue. He had just left the Soho coffee house in Hillcrest, a heavily gay neighborhood. He turned down Fourth Street and paused to look at the display in an optician's window. Someone shouted, "Hey, faggot!" He felt pain in his shoulder and turned in time to see a white Nissan speeding away. Someone had shot him, luckily only with a pellet gun. The pellet tore through the shirt and penetrated the skin. He went home and treated the wound with peroxide.

Later that year, on the night of December 13, a 17-year-old named John Wear and two other boys were headed to the Soho on University Avenue when a pair of young men set upon them, calling them "faggots." One boy escaped, another's face was gashed and Wear (who, his family said, was not gay) was stabbed. Cashmore went to the hospital to see him but, on arriving, was met with the news that Wear was dead.

This is life—not all of life, but an aspect of life—for gay people in today's America. Homosexuals are objects of scorn for teenagers and of sympathy or moral fear or hatred for adults. They grow up in confusion and bewilderment as children, then often pass into denial as young adults and sometimes remain frightened even into old age. They are persecuted by the military, are denied the sanctuary of publicly recognized marriage, occasionally are prosecuted outright for making love. If closeted, they live with fear of revelation; if open, they must daily negotiate a hundred delicate tactical issues. (Should I bring it up? Tell my boss? My co-workers? Wear a wedding band? Display my lover's picture?)

There is also AIDS and the stigma attached to it, though AIDS is not uniquely a problem of gay people. And there is the violence. One of my high school friends—an honors student at Brophy Prep, a prestigious Catholic high school in Phoenix—used to boast about his late-night exploits with a baseball bat at the "fag Denny's." I'm sure he was lying, but imagine the horror of being spoken to, and about, in that way.

If you ask gay people in America today whether homosexuals are oppressed, I think most would say yes. If you ask why, they would point to the sorts of facts that I just mentioned. The facts are not blinkable. Yet the oppression diagnosis is, for the most part, wrong.

Not wrong in the sense that life for American homosexuals is hunky-dory. It is not. But life is not terrible for most gay people, either, and it is becoming less terrible every year. The experience of gayness and the social status of homosexuals have changed rapidly in the last twenty years, largely owing to the courage of thousands who decided that they had had enough abuse and who demanded better. With change has come the time for a reassessment.

The standard political model sees homosexuals as an oppressed minority who must fight for their liberation through political action. But that model's usefulness is drawing to a close. It is ceasing to serve the interests of ordinary gay people, who ought to begin disengaging from it, even drop it. Otherwise, they will misread their position and lose their way, as too many minority groups have done already.

"Oppression" has become every minority's word for practically everything, a one-size-fits-all political designation used by anyone who feels unequal, aggrieved or even uncomfortable. I propose a start toward restoring meaning to the notion of oppression by insisting on *objective* evidence. A sense of grievance or discomfort, however real, is not enough.

By now, human beings know a thing or two about

Bigotry hurts.

Every day law abiding citizens lose their jobs, their homes, and their access to health care because of their sexual orientation. Thousands of military personnel are discharged, at a cost of millions of dollars to the taxpayers, simply because of bigotry against lesbian and gay Americans.

The Human Rights Campaign Fund is America's largest lesbian and gay political organization. We participate in electoral campaigns, lobby in Congress and mobilize fair-minded Americans in support of civil rights and health care for lesbian and gay Americans.

Readers of *The New Republic* can help us win the fight for fairness. Join the Human Rights Campaign Fund and our 70,000 members in the effort to end discrimination.



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oppression. Though it may, indeed, take many forms and work in different ways, there are objective signs you can look for. My own list would emphasize five main items. First, direct legal or governmental discrimination. Second, denial of political franchise—specifically, denial of the right to vote, organize, speak or lobby. Third—and here we move beyond the strictly political—the systematic denial of education. Fourth, impoverishment relative to the non-oppressed population. And, fifth, a pattern of human rights violations, without recourse.

Any one or two of those five signposts may appear for reasons other than oppression. There are a lot of reasons why a people may be poor, for instance. But where you see a minority that is legally barred from businesses and neighborhoods and jobs, that cannot vote, that is poor and poorly educated and that lives in physical fear, you are looking at, for instance, the blacks of South Africa, or blacks of the American South until the 1960s; the Jews and homosexuals of Nazi Germany and Vichy France; the untouchable castes of India, the Kurds of Iraq, the women of Saudi Arabia, the women of America 100 years ago; for that matter, the entire population of the former Soviet Union and many Arab and African and Asian countries.

And gay people in America today? Criterion one—direct legal or governmental discrimination—is resoundingly met. Homosexual relations are illegal in twenty-three states, at least seven of which specifically single out acts between persons of the same sex. Gay marriage is not legally recognized anywhere. And the government hounds gay people from the military, not for what they do but for what they are.

Criterion two—denial of political franchise—is resoundingly not met. Not only do gay people vote, they are turning themselves into a constituency to be reckoned with and fought for. Otherwise, the Patrick Buchanans of the world would have sounded contemptuous of gay people at the Republican convention last year, rather than panicked by them. If gay votes didn't count, Bill Clinton would not have stuck his neck out on the military issue during the primary season (one of the bravest things any living politician has done).

Criterion three—denial of education—is also resoundingly not met. Overlooked Opinions Inc., a Chicago market-research company, has built a diverse national base of 35,000 gay men and lesbians, two-thirds of whom are either not out of the closet or are only marginally out, and has then randomly sampled them in surveys. It found that homosexuals had an average of 15.7 years of education, as against 12.7 years for the population as a whole. Obviously, the findings may be skewed if college-educated gay people are likelier to take part in surveys (though Overlooked Opinions said that results didn't follow degree of closetedness). Still, any claim that gay people are denied education appears ludicrous.

Criterion four—relative impoverishment—is also not met. In Overlooked Opinions' sample, gay men had an average household income of \$51,624 and lesbians \$42,755, compared with the national average of \$36,800.

Again, yuppie homosexuals may be more likely to answer survey questions than blue-collar ones. But, again, to call homosexuals an impoverished class would be silly.

Criterion five—human rights violations without recourse—is also, in the end, not met, though here it's worth taking a moment to see why it is not. The number of gay bashings has probably increased in recent years (though it's hard to know, what with reporting vagaries), and, of course, many gay-bashers either aren't caught or aren't jailed. What too many gay people forget, though, is that these are problems that homosexuals have in common with non-gay Americans. Though many gay-bashers go free, so do many murderers. In the District of Columbia last year, the police identified suspects in fewer than half of all murders, to say nothing of assault cases.

And the fact is that anti-gay violence is just one part of a much broader pattern. Probably not coincidentally, the killing of John Wear happened in the context of a year, 1991, that broke San Diego's all-time homicide record (1992 was runner-up). Since 1965 the homicide rate in America has doubled, the violent crime arrest rate for juveniles has more than tripled; people now kill you to get your car, they kill you to get your shoes or your potato chips, they kill you because they can do it. A particularly ghastly fact is that homicide due to gunshot is now the second leading cause of death in high school-age kids, after car crashes. No surprise, then, that gay people are afraid. So is everyone else.

Chances are, indeed, that gay people's social class makes them safer, on average, than other urban minorities. Certainly their problem is small compared with what blacks face in inner-city Los Angeles or Chicago, where young black males are likelier to be killed than a U.S. soldier was in a tour of duty in Vietnam.

If any problem unites gay people with non-gay people, it is crime. If any issue does not call for special-interest pleading, this is it. Minority advocates, including gay ones, have blundered insensitively by trying to carve out hate-crime statutes and other special-interest crime laws instead of focusing on tougher measures against violence of all kinds. In trying to sensitize people to crimes aimed specifically at minorities, they are inadvertently desensitizing them to the vastly greater threat of crime against everyone. They contribute to the routinization of murder, which has now reached the point where news of a black girl spray-painted white makes the front pages, but news of a black girl murdered runs in a round-up on page D-6 ("Oh, another killing"). Yes, gay-bashing is a problem. But, no, it isn't oppression. It is, rather, an obscenely ordinary feature of the American experience.

Of course, homosexuals face unhappiness, discrimination and hatred. But for everyone with a horror story to tell, there are others like an academic I know, a tenured professor who is married to his lover of fourteen years in every way but legally, who owns a split-level

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Making Transitions

The U.S. has the worst school-to-work transition system in the industrialized world. It would be more accurate, in fact, to say that we have no system at all.

For high school students planning to go to college, we have an elaborate system of supports. Guidance counselors advise them on what courses they need and how to prepare for SAT or ACT examinations. When the time comes to apply, these kids get advice on how to ask for references and fill out college applications and forms for grants and loans. In other words, we put a big investment into getting these youngsters ready for college.

But for kids who are going to work instead of college—that's approximately half of our high school graduates—we offer very little. Schools know what courses kids need to get into college, but they have no idea what courses will help students get ready for jobs. And work-bound students are given no advice about where to find jobs or how to go about applying for them. This lack of help may be no hardship for youngsters whose parents are well-connected and can help them get jobs, but it is very tough for kids who don't have that kind of help.

Other industrialized nations do a much better job of connecting youngsters with the world of work. In Germany, where there is a long tradition of youth apprenticeship, the system serves 60 percent of students between the ages of 16 and 18. All employers make a certain number of work placements available for young people who are still in school, and the kids combine on-the-job learning with school work. This youth apprenticeship system has a number of benefits in addition to the job experience students get. What students learn in school becomes more meaningful to them as they see how reading or math or science is used on the job. And because it is very hard to get decent employment unless they have graduated from the apprenticeship program, students are motivated to stay in school.

President Clinton recognizes the terrible price we pay for our lack of a school-to-work transition system and wants to do something about it. And because the German youth apprenticeship system is such a success, lots of people are urging its adoption. However, to make the system work here as well as it does in Germany and elsewhere, we will have to do a number of things differently.



We put a big investment into getting youngsters ready for college. But for kids who are going to work instead of college, we offer very little.

A major reason youth apprenticeship works in Germany is because it is not voluntary; it is a pay or play system. Employers who do not participate in training youth apprentices have to pay a tax that supports government-sponsored training programs.

A pay or play system would meet with lots of opposition from American business, but a voluntary system is not likely to work at all. Companies are unlikely to institute apprenticeship programs if they are voluntary. Such programs cost money, and companies that invest money are likely to lose it as their trained apprentices are hired away by nonparticipating companies. In a voluntary system, companies that participate subsidize training for companies that choose not to—a powerful disincentive against participation. If we are serious about the German model, we will have to adopt something like the German pay or play system so costs and benefits are shared equally by all.

Another crucial difference between the U.S. and nations that have youth apprenticeships is that these other countries have a social contract among government, business and labor. Instead of the American system of labor-relations warfare, there exists a system of cooperation and codetermination. Unions actually plan and union workers manage the apprenticeship program. Employers rarely dismiss workers or close plants because they face heavy financial sanctions if they do so. The right of unions to exist and represent workers is unquestioned. So unions and their workers don't have to worry, as they do here, that youth apprentices will be used to undercut the wages of adult workers or displace them altogether. This social contract is what makes the youth apprenticeship system possible. It does not exist in the U.S.

Youth apprenticeship is worth developing, but we have to overcome these barriers before we can be confident that it can serve as *the* American-style school-to-work transition system. While we are working to develop this new system, we should expand and improve the school-to-work programs we already have. And we should work to establish employment offices in every high school to perform for youngsters who are going right to work the kind of function that college counselors perform for college-bound kids.

The difference between the services we provide these two groups of kids is an outrage, and we should support President Clinton in his commitment to end it.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker.

Straight answer

When you grow tired of military theory and wish to actually observe straight men coping with a lot of unsolicited attention from gay men, about the best place to go is the Washington YMCA. Ill-suited for military use, the locker rooms there are nevertheless useful for considering our most vexing military problem: how a straight man should respond to the various types of homosexual advances. In the following scenarios, I offer suggestions, with the hope of advancing the debate.

The lustful gaze: The vast majority of homosexual overtures take the form of innocuous attempts to establish eye contact that, once ignored, cease and desist. Unfortunately, the more ardent homophobe tends to view looking the other way as an admission of defeat. We're so inured to the sight of straight men responding violently to the mere idea of another man finding them attractive that we don't pause to consider how bizarre this reaction is. Why the anger?

One explanation lies in the straight man's inchoate sense that he is unprepared for the challenge: most men simply lack the sexual political skills for these occasions. The heterosexual male was raised to pursue; suddenly he's the pursued. Having paid little attention to the sexual implications of his body language, he is justifiably unsure of what he might be saying when he isn't saying anything. These sort of skills, of course, come as second nature to women. That is why men are more traumatized than women by homosexual advances; and that helps to explain why male soldiers strongly oppose the lifting of the gay ban while female soldiers strongly support it. After a lifetime of dealing with straight men, straight women find lesbian advances a cinch.

Of course, the heterosexual's irrational anger is driven by more than mere technical inadequacy. To some extent it is caused by the willful refusal to play a woman's role. The will is positively correlated with the heterosexual's misogyny. Put another way, some men may find the business of deflecting unwanted homosexual attention disturbing not because they are secretly gay (the explanation favored by many gay activists) but because they consider all female roles

degrading. It is no accident that the military culture that gave us the Tailhook scandal also generates some of the more violent responses to homosexual overtures.

In short, if you really can't turn a blind eye, seek professional help.

The stalker who talks: Explicit propositions are a bit trickier because they require you to take some positive action. And because you can never be quite sure what signals you have sent, you should not hold it against your suitor that he thinks he stands a chance. The ideal gentlemanly response to the homosexual proposition conveys a distaste for the thing proposed without conveying a distaste for the person who proposes the thing. The problem is not who he is, but what he wants from you. And even that is a bit flattering, when you think about it.

Of course, you don't think about it. You think: "Oh shit." When for the first time you're not the instigator, confrontation provokes involuntary panic. For several months I was unable to go to the Y without bumping into a sad, gregarious, hairless young man. Seemingly all hours of day and night he stood across from me in the showers, and made eyes. Plan A, ignoring him, seemed only to encourage him, so I shifted to Plan B. Plan B was a more overt attempt to convey my true sexual identity, with a gruff conversational style, and a side-to-side heteroswagger modeled in early youth on the back-to-the-huddle strut of the great running back Jim Brown. That didn't work either. The Big Question—whether to shower facing in or facing out—soon gave way to the decision to shower so quickly that it didn't matter.

Eventually the situation came to a head. They always do. One evening the young man followed me out of the showers. I gave him the slip on the way to my locker, where I dropped the towel from around my waist and attempted to leap into all my clothes at once. But as I hopped with one leg in a pair of boxer shorts the hairless youth spoke softly into my right ear.

"Hi guy!" he said, as if auditioning for a role in the old after-shave commercial. "Buy you a drink?"

Ideally, what I should have said is: "I suspect that you are gay. Although I have no objection to your sexuality,

I do not share it. So I'd appreciate it if you'd leave me be. But thank you for your interest." What I said was: "Uh, hi." He smiled encouragingly. At length I said, "I've got to go somewhere; it's urgent." He took the seat beside me and looked up soulfully. "I hope it's nothing serious," he said. "A lady calls," I said in a panic, which did the trick, albeit mendaciously.

The full frontal physical assault: Square-shouldered American men who want to sound at once liberal, practical and knowing about the gay ban often come out with something like this: "I think Clinton is basically right, but you have to understand how these military people live. What happens if the guy in the top bunk leans down in the middle of the night and gives you a kiss?"

Begin by acknowledging that this sort of thing happens very rarely in real life, as opposed to in military fantasy. The gay man who behaves boorishly, or refuses to take the hint, is as embarrassing to other gay men as he is to his victims. But there is no use denying that gay pests exist, just as straight pests exist. They plop their hand on your knee just as the train goes into the tunnel. They pull fast ones at the urinals.

Straight men know about these situations because they tell each other about them, usually in tones of detached amusement—which tells you how deeply threatening the incidents actually are. The most recent story I heard was told by a friend who arrived late with his girlfriend to a ballet at the Kennedy Center. As they waited in the rear, he felt a hand stroking the top of his leg. He assumed it belonged to his girlfriend. But as he became aroused he noticed his girlfriend's hands were clutched together. Looking down he discovered, still stroking away, a tiny middle-aged man in a white tuxedo. Had he had time to think, he says, he would have simply asked the man please to stop. But he was for that magic moment pure instinct. He "yelped" (his word) a yelp that carried to the front row. And the little man in the white tuxedo scrambled off into the rafters, as you would expect.

My friend now says that he wishes he had behaved more calmly. After all, he is a gentleman. Just so.

MICHAEL LEWIS

condo in Los Angeles, drives a Miata, enjoys prestige and success and love that would be the envy of millions of straight Americans. These things did not fall in his lap. He fought personal and professional battles, was passed over for jobs and left the closet when that was much riskier than it is today. Asked if he is oppressed, he says, "You're damn straight." But a mark of oppression is that most of its victims are not allowed to succeed; they are allowed only to fail. And this man is no mere token. He is one of a growing multitude of openly gay people who have overcome the past and, in doing so, changed the present.

"I'm a gay person, so I don't live in a free country," one highly successful gay writer said recently, "and I don't think most straight people really sit down and realize that for gay people this is basically a totalitarian society in which we're barely tolerated." The reason straight people don't realize this is because it obviously isn't true. As more and more homosexuals come out of hiding, the reality of gay economic and political and educational achievement becomes more evident. And as that happens, gay people who insist they are oppressed will increasingly, and not always unfairly, come off as yuppie whiners, "victims" with \$50,000 incomes and vacations in Europe. They may feel they are oppressed, but they will have a harder and harder time convincing the public.

They will distort their politics, too, twisting it into strained and impotent shapes. Scouring for oppressions with which to identify, activists are driven further and further afield. They grab fistfuls of random political demands and stuff them in their pockets. The original platform for April's March on Washington called for, among other things, enforced bilingual education, "an end to genocide of all the indigenous peoples and their cultures," defense budget cuts, universal health care, a national needle exchange program, free substance-abuse treatment on demand, safe and affordable abortion, more money for breast cancer "and other cancers particular to women," "unrestricted, safe and affordable alternative insemination," health care for the "differently-abled and physically challenged" and "an end to poverty." Here was the oppression-entitlement mentality gone haywire.

Worst of all, oppression politics distorts the face of gay America itself. It encourages people to forget that homosexuality isn't hell. As the AIDS crisis has so movingly shown, gay people have built the kind of community that evaporated for many non-gay Americans decades ago. You don't see straight volunteers queuing up to change cancer patients' bedpans and deliver their groceries. Gay people—and unmarried people generally—are at a disadvantage in the top echelons of corporate America, but, on the other hand, they have achieved dazzlingly in culture and business and much else. They lead lives of richness and competence and infinite variety, lives that are not miserable or squashed.

The insistence that gay people are oppressed is most damaging, in the end, because it implies that to be gay

is to suffer. It affirms what so many straight people, even sympathetic ones, believe in their hearts: that homosexuals are pitiable. That alone is reason to junk the oppression model, preferably sooner instead of later.

If the oppression model is failing, what is the right model? Not that of an oppressed people seeking redemption through political action; rather, that of an ostracized people seeking redemption through personal action. What do you do about misguided ostracism? The most important thing is what Glenn Cashmore did. After John Wear's murder, he came out of the closet. He wrote an article in the *Los Angeles Times* denouncing his own years of silence. He stepped into the circle of people who are what used to be called known homosexuals.

This makes a difference. *The New York Times* conducted a poll on homosexuals this year and found that people who had a gay family member or close friend "were much more tolerant and accepting." Whereas oppression politics fails because it denies reality, positive personal example works because it demonstrates reality. "We're here, we're queer, get used to it," Queer Nation's chant, is not only a brilliant slogan. It is a strategy. It is, in some ways, *the* strategy. To move away from oppression politics is not to sit quietly. It is often to hold hands in public or take a lover to the company Christmas party, sometimes to stage kiss-ins, always to be unashamed. It is to make of honesty a kind of activism.

Gay Americans should emulate Jewish Americans, who have it about right. Jews recognize that to many Americans we will always seem different (and we are, in some ways, different). We grow up being fed "their" culture in school, in daily life, even in the calendar. It never stops. For a full month of every year, every radio program and shop window reminds you that this is, culturally, a Christian nation (no, not Judeo-Christian). Jews could resent this, but most of us choose not to, because, by way of compensation, we think hard, we work hard, we are cohesive, we are interesting. We recognize that minorities will always face special burdens of adjustment, but we also understand that with those burdens come rewards of community and spirit and struggle. We recognize that there will always be a minority of Americans who hate us, but we also understand that, so long as we stay watchful, this hateful minority is more pathetic than threatening. We watch it; we fight it when it lashes out; but we do not organize our personal and political lives around it.

Gay people's main weapons are ones we already possess. In America, our main enemies are superstition and hate. Superstition is extinguished by public criticism and by the power of moral example. Political activists always underestimate the power of criticism and moral example to change people's minds, and they always overestimate the power of law and force. As for hate, the way to fight it is with love. And that we have in abundance.

JONATHAN RAUCH is author of *Kindly Inquisitors: The New Attacks on Free Thought* (University of Chicago Press).

THE POLITICS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

By Andrew Sullivan

Over the last four years I have been sent letters from strangers caught in doomed, desperate marriages because of repressed homosexuality and witnessed several thousand virtually naked, muscle-bound men dance for hours in the middle of New York City, in the middle of the day. I have lain down on top of a dying friend to restrain his hundred-pound body as it violently shook with the death-throes of AIDS and listened to soldiers equate the existence of homosexuals in the military with the dissolution of the meaning of the United States. I have openly discussed my sexuality on a television talk show and sat on the porch of an apartment building in downtown D.C. with an arm around a male friend and watched as a dozen cars in a half hour slowed to hurl abuse. I have seen mass advertising explicitly cater to an openly gay audience and watched my own father break down and weep at the declaration of his son's sexuality.

These different experiences of homosexuality are not new, of course. But that they can now be experienced within one life (and that you are now reading about them) is new. The cultural categories and social departments into which we once successfully consigned sexuality—departments that helped us avoid the anger and honesty with which we are now confronted—have begun to collapse. Where once there were patterns of discreet and discrete behavior to follow, there is now only an unnerving confusion of roles and identities. Where once there was only the unmentionable, there are now only the unavoidable: gays, "queers," homosexuals, closet cases, bisexuals, the "out" and the "in," paraded for every heterosexual to see. As the straight world has been confronted with this, it has found itself reaching for a response: embarrassment, tolerance, fear, violence, oversensitivity, recognition. When Sam Nunn conducts hearings, he knows there is no common discourse in which he can now speak, that even the words he uses will betray worlds of conflicting experience and anxieties. Yet speak he must. In place of the silence that once encased the lives of homosexuals, there is now a loud argument. And there is no easy going back.

This fracturing of discourse is more than a cultural problem; it is a political problem. Without at least some common ground, no effective compromise to the homosexual question will be possible. Matters may be

resolved, as they have been in the case of abortion, by a stand-off in the forces of cultural war. But unless we begin to discuss this subject with a degree of restraint and reason, the visceral unpleasantness that exploded earlier this year will dog the question of homosexuality for a long time to come, intensifying the anxieties that politics is supposed to relieve.

There are as many politics of homosexuality as there are words for it, and not all of them contain reason. And it is harder perhaps in this passionate area than in any other to separate a wish from an argument, a desire from a denial. Nevertheless, without such an effort, no true politics of sexuality can emerge. And besides, there are some discernible patterns, some sketches of political theory that have begun to emerge with clarity. I will discuss here only four, but four that encompass a reasonable span of possible arguments. Each has a separate analysis of sexuality and a distinct solution to the problem of gay-straight relations. Perhaps no person belongs in any single category; and they are by no means exclusive of one another. What follows is a brief description of each: why each is riven by internal and external conflict; and why none, finally, works.

I.

The first I'll call, for the sake of argument, the conservative politics of sexuality. Its view of homosexuality is as dark as it is popular as it is unfashionable. It informs much of the opposition to allowing openly gay men and women to serve in the military and can be heard in living rooms, churches, bars and computer bulletin boards across America. It is found in most of the families in which homosexuals grow up and critically frames many homosexuals' view of their own identity. Its fundamental assertion is that homosexuality as such does not properly exist. Homosexual behavior is aberrant activity, either on the part of heterosexuals intent on subverting traditional society or by people who are prey to psychological, emotional or sexual dysfunction.

For adherents to the conservative politics of sexuality, therefore, the homosexual question concerns everyone. It cannot be dismissed merely as an affliction of the individual but is rather one that afflicts society at large.

Since society depends on the rearing of a healthy future generation, the existence of homosexuals is a grave problem. People who would otherwise be living productive and socially beneficial lives are diverted by homosexuality into unhappiness and sterility, and they may seek, in their bleak attempts at solace, to persuade others to join them. Two gerundives cling to this view of homosexuals: practicing and proselytizing. And both are habitually uttered with a mixture of pity and disgust.

The politics that springs out of this view of homosexuality has two essential parts: with the depraved, it must punish; with the sick, it must cure. There are, of course, degrees to which these two activities can be promoted. The recent practice in modern liberal democracies of imprisoning homosexuals or subjecting them to psychological or physiological "cures" is a good deal less repressive than the camps for homosexuals in Castro's Cuba, the spasmodic attempt at annihilation in Nazi Germany or the brutality of modern Islamic states. And the sporadic entrapment of gay men in public restrooms or parks is a good deal less repressive than the systematic hunting down and discharging of homosexuals that we require of our armed forces. But the differences are matters of degree rather than of kind; and the essential characteristic of the conservative politics of homosexuality is that it pursues the logic of repression. Not for conservatives the hypocrisy of those who tolerate homosexuality in private and abhor it in public. They seek rather to grapple with the issue directly and to sustain the carapace of public condemnation and legal sanction that can keep the dark presence of homosexuality at bay.

This is not a distant politics. In twenty-four states sodomy is still illegal, and the constitutionality of these statutes was recently upheld by the Supreme Court. Much of the Republican Party supports this politics with varying degrees of sympathy for the victims of the affliction. The Houston convention was replete with jokes by speaker Patrick Buchanan that implicitly affirmed this view. Banners held aloft by delegates asserted "Family Rights For Ever, Gay Rights Never," implying a direct trade-off between tolerating homosexuals and maintaining the traditional family.

In its crudest and most politically dismissible forms, this politics invokes biblical revelation to make its civic claims. But in its subtler form, it draws strength from the natural law tradition, which, for all its failings, is a resilient pillar of Western thought. Following a Thomist argument, conservatives argue that the natural function of sexuality is clearly procreative; and that all expressions of it outside procreation destroy human beings' potential for full and healthy development. Homosexuality—far from being natural—is clearly a perversion of, or turning away from, the legitimate and healthy growth of the human person.

Perhaps the least helpful element in the current debate is the assertion that this politics is simply bigotry. It isn't. Many bigots may, of course, support it, and by bigots I mean those whose "visceral recoil" from homo-

sexuals (to quote Buchanan) expresses itself in thuggery and name-calling. But there are some who don't support anti-gay violence and who sincerely believe discouragement of homosexuality by law and "curing" homosexuals is in the best interest of everybody.

Nevertheless, this politics suffers from an increasingly acute internal contradiction and an irresistible external development. It is damaged, first, by the growing evidence that homosexuality does in fact exist as an identifiable and involuntary characteristic of some people, and that these people do not as a matter of course suffer from moral or psychological dysfunction; that it is, in other words, as close to "natural" as any human condition can be. New data about the possible genetic origins of homosexuality are only one part of this development. By far the most important element is the testimony of countless homosexuals. The number who say their orientation is a choice make up only a tiny minority; and the candor of those who say it isn't is overwhelming. To be sure, it is in the interests of gay people to affirm their lack of choice over the matter; but the consensus among homosexuals, the resilience of lesbian and gay minorities in the face of deep social disapproval and even a plague, suggests that homosexuality, whatever one would like to think, simply is not often chosen. A fundamental claim of natural law is that its truths are self-evident: across continents and centuries, homosexuality is a self-evident fact of life.

How large this population is does not matter. One percent or 10 percent: as long as a small but persistent part of the population is involuntarily gay, then the entire conservative politics of homosexuality rests on an unstable footing. It becomes simply a politics of denial or repression. Faced with a sizable and inextinguishable part of society, it can only pretend that it does not exist, or needn't be addressed, or can somehow be dismissed. This politics is less coherent than even the politics that opposed civil rights for blacks thirty years ago, because at least that had some answer to the question of the role of blacks in society, however subordinate. Today's conservatives have no role for homosexuals; they want them somehow to disappear, an option that was once illusory and is now impossible.

Some conservatives and conservative institutions have recognized this. They've even begun to use the term "homosexual," implicitly accepting the existence of a constitutive characteristic. Some have avoided it by the innovative term "homosexualist," but most cannot do so without a wry grin on their faces. The more serious opponents of equality for homosexuals finesse the problem by restricting their objections to "radical homosexuals," but the distinction doesn't help. They are still forced to confront the problem of *unradical* homosexuals, people whose sexuality is, presumably, constitutive. To make matters worse, the Roman Catholic Church—the firmest religious proponent of the conservative politics of homosexuality—has explicitly conceded the point. It declared in 1975 that homosexuality is indeed involuntary for many. In the recent Universal Cate-

chism, the Church goes even further. Homosexuality is described as a "condition" of a "not negligible" number of people who "do not choose" their sexuality and deserve to be treated with "respect, compassion and sensitivity." More critically, because of homosexuality's involuntary nature, it cannot of itself be morally culpable (although homosexual *acts* still are). The doctrine is thus no longer "hate the sin but love the sinner"; it's "hate the sin but accept the condition," a position unique in Catholic theology, and one that has already begun to creak under the strain of its own tortuousness.

But the loss of intellectual solidity isn't the only problem for the conservative politics of homosexuality. In a liberal polity, it has lost a good deal of its political coherence as well. When many people in a liberal society insist upon their validity as citizens and human beings, repression becomes a harder and harder task. It offends against fundamental notions of decency and civility to treat them as simple criminals or patients. To hunt them down, imprison them for private acts, subject government workers to surveillance and dismissal for reasons related to their deepest sense of personal identity becomes a policy not simply cruel but politically impossible in a civil order. For American society to return to the social norms around the question of homosexuality of a generation ago would require a renewed act of repression that not even many zealots could contemplate. What generations of inherited shame could not do, what AIDS could not accomplish, what the most decisive swing toward conservatism in the 1980s could not muster, must somehow be accomplished in the next few years. It simply cannot be done.

So even Patrick Buchanan is reduced to joke-telling; senators to professions of ignorance; military leaders to rationalizations of sheer discomfort. For those whose politics are a mere extension of religious faith, such impossibilism is part of the attraction (and spiritually, if not politically, defensible). But for conservatives who seek to act as citizens in a secular, civil order, the dilemma is terminal. An unremittingly hostile stance toward homosexuals runs the risk of sectarianism. At some point, not reached yet but fast approaching, their politics could become so estranged from the society in which it operates that it could cease to operate as a politics altogether.

II.

The second politics of homosexuality shares with the first a conviction that homosexuality as an inherent and natural condition does not exist. Homosexuality, in this politics, is a cultural construction, a binary social conceit (along with heterosexuality) forced upon the sexually amorphous (all of us). This politics attempts to resist this oppressive construct, subverting it and subverting the society that allows it to fester. Where the first politics takes as its starting point the Thomist faith in nature, the second springs from the Nietzschean desire to surpass all natural necessities, to attack the construct of "nature" itself. Thus the pursuit of a homosexual existence is but one strategy of many to

enlarge the possibility for human liberation.

Call this the radical politics of homosexuality. For the radicals, like the conservatives, homosexuality is definitely a choice: the choice to be a "queer," the choice to subvert oppressive institutions, the choice to be an activist. And it is a politics that, insofar as it finds its way from academic discourse into gay activism (and it does so fitfully), exercises a peculiar fascination for the adherents of the first politics. At times, indeed, both seem to exist in a bond of mutual contempt and admiration. That both prefer to use the word "queer," the one in private, the other in irony, is only one of many resemblances. They both react with disdain to those studies that seem to reflect a genetic source for homosexuality; and they both favor, to some extent or other, the process of outing, because for both it is the flushing out of deviant behavior: for conservatives, of the morally impure, for radicals, of the politically incorrect. For conservatives, radical "queers" provide a frisson of cultural apocalypse and a steady stream of funding dollars. For radicals, the religious right can be tapped as an unreflective and easy justification for virtually any political impulse whatsoever.

Insofar as this radical politics is synonymous with a subcultural experience, it has stretched the limits of homosexual identity and expanded the cultural space in which some homosexuals can live. In the late 1980s the tactics of groups like Act-Up and Queer Nation did not merely shock and anger, but took the logic of shame-abandonment to a thrilling conclusion. To exist within their sudden energy was to be caught in a liberating rite of passage, which, when it did not transgress into political puritanism, exploded many of the cozy assumptions of closeted homosexual and liberal heterosexual alike.

This politics is as open-ended as the conservative politics is closed-minded. It seeks an end to all restrictions on homosexuality, but also the subversion of heterosexual norms, as taught in schools or the media. By virtue of its intellectual origins, it affirms a close connection with every other minority group, whose cultural subversion of white, heterosexual, male norms is just as vital. It sees its crusades—now for an AIDS czar, now against the Catholic Church's abortion stance, now for the Rainbow Curriculum, now against the military ban—as a unified whole of protest, glorifying in its indiscriminateness as in its universality.

But like the conservative politics of homosexuality, which also provides a protective ghetto of liberation for its disciples, the radical politics of homosexuality now finds itself in an acute state of crisis. Its problem is twofold: its conception of homosexuality is so amorphous and indistinguishable from other minority concerns that it is doomed to be ultimately unfocused; and its relationship with the views of most homosexuals—let alone heterosexuals—is so tenuous that at moments of truth (like the military ban) it strains to have a viable politics at all.

continued on page 32

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After identity

The president warmly greets gay and lesbian leaders at the White House. Hundreds of thousands prepare to march on Washington. Lesbians and gay men may soon end the largest example of institutional discrimination—the military ban. Every media outlet runs dozens of gay stories. Powerful groups from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to the Human Rights Campaign Fund represent us in Washington. A vigorous protest movement fills the streets. But this picture of gay and lesbian power is superficial. In deeper ways, the gay movement still has a long way to go.

Since the 1950s the gay and lesbian movement has won essentially three cultural victories. The first was the admission of psychiatry that we are natural, normal and healthy people—a concession given as recently as 1973, when the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses. The second was the permanent shattering of heterosexual culture's denial of our existence—achieved through our coming out and the building of gay and lesbian communities. And the third is the gain of political access. With the two most tradable forms of political currency in American politics—money and votes—the gay and lesbian movement has earned clout. Access is the legacy born out of the pain of AIDS. We got organized and serious about the political system to save lives.

These achievements mask the limits of what we have won. Discrimination based on sexual orientation is legal in most states and cities. Anti-gay violence is pervasive and rising. Gay and lesbian youth commit suicide in extraordinary numbers, according to a national study commissioned by the Reagan administration. Family and marriage remain a benefit and support legally denied. The religious right is organized, militantly anti-gay and getting stronger. The end of discrimination, the overcoming of cultural prejudice and the task of defining the difference we represent have yet to be begun.

No movement can be built by a people invisible to each other and to society. All the gains we've made derive from the fact that more of us live out of the closet today than at any other moment in history. But the

closet today remains the largest drain on gay and lesbian power. While it's true that most people live in the closet because of fear of discrimination, it's also true that there are as many rationalizations for staying closeted as there are gay men and lesbians. The closet will not disappear until we walk out of it.

Every gay person lives in the closet at some point in her life. That period of self-hatred differs dramatically for young people coming out today compared with those who came out in the 1950s. But the irony of the creation of a gay community has been the creation of a new kind of closet—the closet of gay and lesbian lifestyle. It is possible for gay people today to live in a supportive gay and lesbian community, shop at gay businesses, vacation at gay resorts, participate in gay community and cultural events, but still deny the truth of their lives to families, employers, friends and government. This lifestyle closet is the reason why the most successful gay institution remains the bar. One million are expected to march on Washington this weekend, but fewer than 100,000 people are dues-paying, card-carrying members of any major gay rights organization.

This is a major obstacle to consolidating change. Unlike the religious right or the black civil rights movement, we did not create a political movement from the foundation of institutionalized churches. Unlike many feminist organizations, we haven't yet cracked the stigma that prevents foundation or government funds from flowing to gay and lesbian groups. Unlike the labor movement, we have no unions. We've made some organizational gains. There are now professional associations in every field—legal, student, minority, lesbian groups, sports leagues and cultural organizations providing support for every identity in the gay and lesbian world. But we have yet to take this wealth and organize it into an integrated movement for political power. The creation of an umbrella group, the Campaign for Military Service, shows that, in an emergency, such coordination is possible. It should be possible all year round, built from the smallest town to the state and national level.

Our opponents on the right seed school board and city council elections with stealth candidates who support a comprehensive social agenda that begins with Christian doctrine

and encompasses every aspect of life, including sexuality. Our opponents in 1992 launched a special cable satellite channel to train anti-gay Christian activists. They have mounted two major candidates for president in the last eight years, perfected the use of voter rolls to identify conservative support and carefully used market research to devise media strategies aimed at winning power.

The danger represented by the social right is above all their lock on the way gay issues are framed. Our biggest challenge remains communication of who we are, of what it means to be gay, of what the society will look like when we achieve the full equality we seek. President Clinton was right when he advised gay activists with whom he met that our stories hold the power of persuasion. We must counter disinformation with the truth of our lives.

More, we must articulate an idea of what a post-liberation society looks like, rather than merely reacting to the fears of others. Without this moral vision, we make our appeal for support to America in derivative, unpersuasive terms. We present ourselves as "just like heterosexuals," when most people—straight and gay—believe we are in fact quite different. We appeal to middle-class values (live and let live, individual privacy, equal competition in the marketplace) at a moment when the middle class has shrunk and its values are in flux. Indeed, we argue for civil rights at a moment when the entire paradigm of that phrase has been shifted by conservatives to be equated with "special rights."

The world that gay liberation seeks resembles the world imagined by the movements for racial justice and women's rights—a world in which everyone lives in freedom. Our theoretical challenge is to go beyond mere identity politics to bind equality for gay people with equality for *all* people, minority and majority, women and people of all races and faiths. Until we create a meaningful coalition along these lines, our celebration of the gay and lesbian '90s is premature and hollow.

URVASHI VAID

Urvashi Vaid, former executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, is writing a book on the politics of the gay movement.

Japan and America: Where the Twain Meet

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," Kipling wrote long ago, and even today that saying sums up the feelings of many Americans and Japanese toward each other. But William Brinker, a high school social studies teacher from Farmington Hills, Michigan, disagrees. "The gulf between our cultures exists, but it can be bridged. We just have to work harder at understanding one another."

Brinker was a participant in the annual U.S./Japan Teachers Exchange Program sponsored by Hitachi. Now in its seventh year, this exchange helps promote mutual understanding, cultural awareness, and friendship between our societies on a personal level.

Since 1987, the program has sponsored the visits of 28 American teachers to Japan and 13 Japanese to the United States. This year is the largest exchange so far: four American and four Japanese teachers. For three weeks, they will tour the sites, teach children, and live in the homes of their hosts. For most, it is their first direct exposure to the culture they so often

teach about. Even for Brinker, who had spent time in Japan 36 years ago as a serviceman, the experience was eye-opening. "I came away with a much better understanding of the Japanese people," he says.

As teachers, the American visitors are struck by the way Japanese parents support the school system and the respect students show in the classroom. "The support and love of the family seems to carry out not only in the school system but also into their companies," says Greg Alvarado, a social studies teacher from Daly City, California.

For Delia Grogan-Selby, a department chairperson from Bronxville, New York, the home stay was a highlight of her visit. "I felt like I had

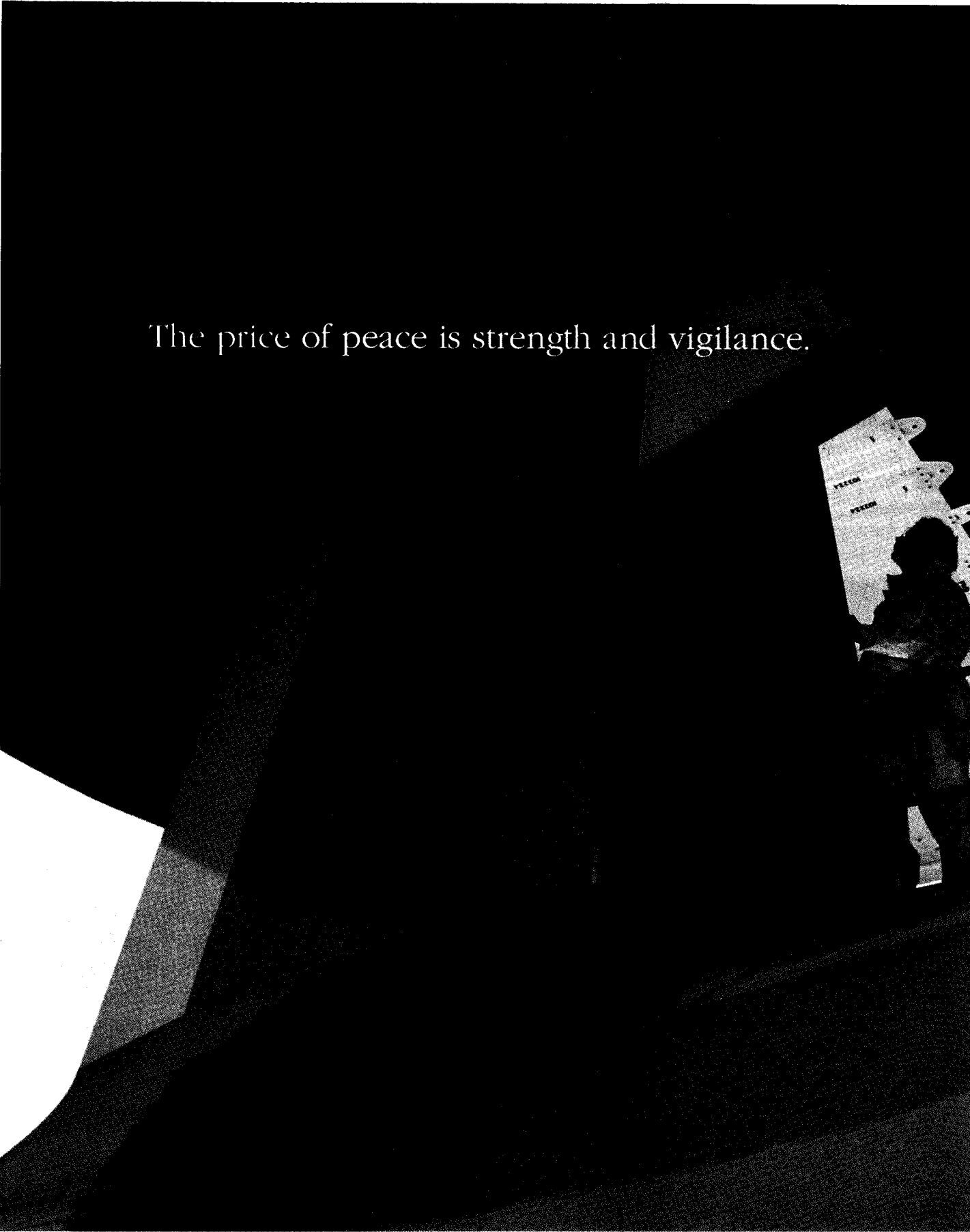
parachuted into my own family, but it was Japan," she says.

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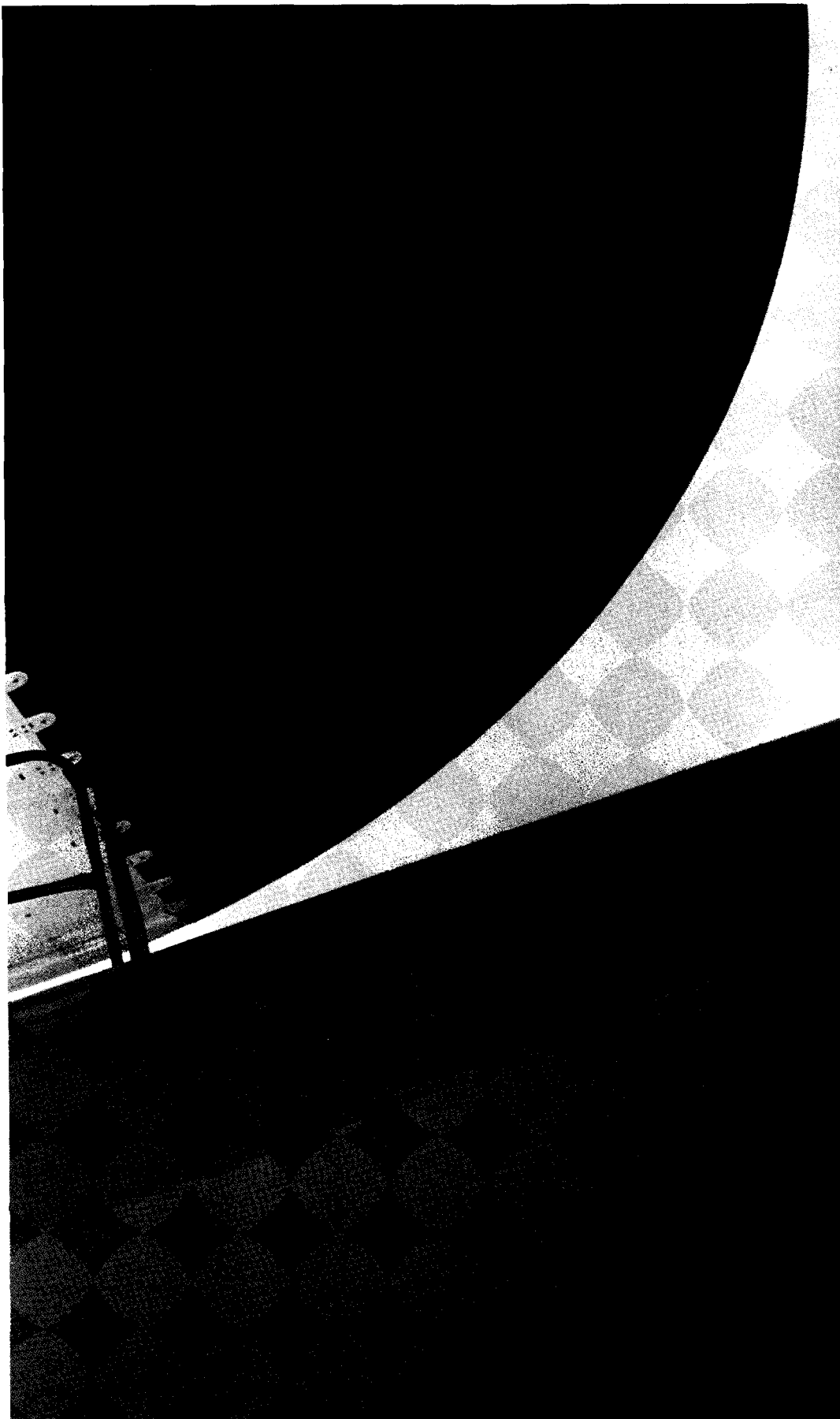


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BOEING

The trouble with gay radicalism, in short, is the problem with subversive politics as a whole. It tends to subvert itself. Act-Up, for example, an AIDS group that began in the late 1980s as an activist group dedicated to finding a cure and better treatment for people with AIDS, soon found itself awash in a cacophony of internal division. Its belief that sexuality was only one of many oppressive constructions meant that it was constantly tempted to broaden its reach, to solve a whole range of gender and ethnic grievances. Similarly, each organizing committee in each state of this weekend's march on Washington was required to have a 50 percent "minority" composition. Even *Utah*. Although this universalist temptation was not always given in to, it exercised an enervating and dissipating effect on gay radicalism's political punch.

More important, the notion of sexuality as cultural subversion distanced it from the vast majority of gay people who not only accept the natural origin of their sexual orientation, but wish to be integrated into society as it is. For most gay people—the closet cases and barflies, the construction workers and investment bankers, the computer programmers and parents—a "queer" identity is precisely what they want to avoid. In this way, the radical politics of homosexuality, like the conservative politics of homosexuality, is caught in a political trap. The more it purifies its own belief about sexuality, the less able it is to engage the broader world as a whole. The more it acts upon its convictions, the less able it is to engage in politics at all.

For the "queer" fundamentalists, like the religious fundamentalists, this is no problem. Politics for both groups is essentially an exercise in theater and rhetoric, in which dialogue with one's opponent is an admission of defeat. It is no accident that Act-Up was founded by a playwright, since its politics was essentially theatrical: a fantastic display of rhetorical pique and visual brilliance. It became a national media hit, but eventually its lines became familiar and the audience's attention wavered. New shows have taken its place and will continue to do

so: but they will always be constrained by their essential nature, which is performance, not persuasion.

The limits of this strategy can be seen in the politics of the military ban. Logically, there is no reason for radicals to support the ending of the ban: it means acceptance of presumably one of the most repressive institutions in American society. And, to be sure, no radical arguments have been made to end the ban. But in the last few months, "queers" have been appearing on television proclaiming that gay people are just like anybody else and defending the right of gay Midwestern Republicans to serve their country. In the pinch, "queer" poli-

tics was forced to abandon its theoretical essence if it was to advance its purported aims: the advancement of gay equality. The military ban illustrated the dilemma perfectly. As soon as radicalism was required actually to engage America, its politics disintegrated.

Similarly, "queer" radicalism's doctrine of cultural subversion and separatism has the effect of alienating those very gay Americans most in need of support and help: the young and teenagers. Separatism is even less of an option for gays than for any other minority, since each generation is literally umbilically connected to the majority. The young are permanently in the hands of the other. By erecting a politics on a doctrine

of separation and difference from the majority, "queer" politics ironically broke off dialogue with the heterosexual families whose cooperation is needed in every generation, if gay children are to be accorded a modicum of dignity and hope.

There's an argument, of course, that radicalism's politics is essentially instrumental; that by stretching the limits of what is acceptable it opens up space for more moderate types to negotiate; that, without Act-Up and Queer Nation, no progress would have been made at all. But this both insults the theoretical integrity of the radical position (they surely do not see themselves as mere adjuncts to liberals) and underestimates the scope of the gay revolution that has been quietly taking place in



ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

America. Far more subversive than media-grabbing demonstrations on the evening news has been the slow effect of individual, private Americans becoming more open about their sexuality. The emergence of role models, the development of professional organizations and student groups, the growing influence of openly gay people in the media and the extraordinary impact of AIDS on families and friends have dwarfed radicalism's impact on the national consciousness. Likewise, the greatest public debate about homosexuality yet—the military debate—took place not because radicals besieged the Pentagon, but because of the ordinary and once-anonymous Americans within the military who simply refused to acquiesce in their own humiliation any longer. Their courage was illustrated not in taking to the streets in rage but in facing their families and colleagues with integrity.

And this presents the deepest problem for radicalism. As the closet slowly collapses, as gay people enter the mainstream, as suburban homosexuals and Republican homosexuals emerge blinking into the daylight, as the gay ghettos of the inner cities are diluted by the gay enclaves of the suburbs, the whole notion of a separate and homogeneous “queer” identity will become harder to defend. Far from redefining gay identity, “queer” radicalism may actually have to define itself in opposition to it. This is implicit in the punitive practice of “outing” and in the increasingly anti-gay politics of some “queer” radicals. But if “queer” politics is to survive, it will either have to be proved right about America's inherent hostility to gay people or become more insistent in its separatism. It will have to intensify its hatred of straights or its contempt for gays. Either path is likely to be as culturally creative as it is politically sterile.

III.

Between these two cultural poles, an appealing alternative presents itself. You can hear it in the tone if not the substance of civilized columnists and embarrassed legislators, who are united most strongly by the desire that this awkward subject simply go away. It is the moderate politics of homosexuality. Unlike the conservatives and radicals, the moderates do believe that a small number of people are inherently homosexual, but they also believe that another group is susceptible to persuasion in that direction and should be dissuaded. These people do not want persecution of homosexuals, but they do not want overt approval either. They are most antsy when it comes to questions of the education of children but feel acute discomfort in supporting the likes of Patrick Buchanan and Pat Robertson.

Thus their politics has all the nuance and all the disingenuousness of classically conservative politics. They are not intolerant, but they oppose the presence of openly gay teachers in school; they have gay friends but hope their child isn't homosexual; they are in favor of ending the military ban but would seek to do so either by reimposing the closet (ending discrimination in return for

gay people never mentioning their sexuality) or by finding some other kind of solution, such as simply ending the witch hunts. If they support sodomy laws (*pour décourager les autres*), they prefer to see them unenforced. In either case, they do not regard the matter as very important. They are ambivalent about domestic partnership legislation but are offended by gay marriage. Above all, they prefer that the subject of homosexuality be discussed with delicacy and restraint, and are only likely to complain to their gay friends if they insist upon “bringing the subject up” too often.

This position too has a certain coherence. It insists that politics is a matter of custom as well as principle and that, in the words of Nunn, caution on the matter of sexuality is not so much a matter of prejudice as of prudence. It places a premium on discouraging the sexually ambivalent from resolving their ambiguity freely in the direction of homosexuality, because, society being as it is, such a life is more onerous than a heterosexual one. It sometimes exchanges this argument for the more honest one: that it wishes to promote procreation and the healthy rearing of the next generation and so wishes to create a cultural climate that promotes heterosexuality.

But this politics too has become somewhat unstable, if not as unstable as the first two. And this instability stems from an internal problem and a related external one. Being privately tolerant and publicly disapproving exacts something of a psychological cost on those who maintain it. In theory, it is not the same as hypocrisy; in practice, it comes perilously close. As the question of homosexuality refuses to disappear from public debate, explicit positions have to be taken. What once could be shrouded in discretion now has to be argued in public. For those who privately do not believe that homosexuality is inherently evil or always chosen, it has become increasingly difficult to pretend otherwise in public. Silence is an option—and numberless politicians are now availing themselves of it—but increasingly a decision will have to be made. Are you in favor of or against allowing openly gay women and men to continue serving their country? Do you favor or oppose gay marriage? Do you support the idea of gay civil rights laws? Once these questions are asked, the gentle ambiguity of the moderates must be flushed out; they have to be forced either into the conservative camp or into formulating a new politics that does not depend on a code of discourse that is fast becoming defunct.

They cannot even rely upon their gay friends anymore. What ultimately sustained this politics was the complicity of the gay elites in it: their willingness to stay silent when a gay joke was made in their presence, their deference to the euphemisms—roommate, friend, companion—that denoted their lovers, husbands and wives, their support of the heterosexual assumptions of polite society. Now that complicity, if not vanished, has come under strain. There are fewer and fewer J. Edgar Hoovers and Roy Cohns, and the thousands of discreet gay executives and journalists, businessmen and politi-

cians who long deferred to their sexual betters in matters of etiquette. AIDS rendered their balancing act finally absurd. Many people—gay and straight—were forced to have the public courage of their private convictions. They had to confront the fact that their delicacy was a way of disguising shame; that their silence was a means of hiding from themselves their intolerance. This is not an easy process; indeed, it can be a terrifying one for both gay and straight people alike. But there comes a point after which omissions become commissions; and that point, if not here yet, is coming. When it arrives, the moderate politics of homosexuality will be essentially over.

IV.

The politics that is the most durable in our current attempt to deal with the homosexual question is the contemporary liberal politics of homosexuality. Like the moderates, the liberals accept that homosexuality exists, that it is involuntary for a proportion of society, that for a few more it is an option and that it need not be discouraged. Viewing the issue primarily through the prism of the civil rights movement, the liberals seek to extend to homosexuals the same protections they have granted to other minorities. The prime instrument for this is the regulation of private activities by heterosexuals, primarily in employment and housing, to guarantee non-discrimination against homosexuals.

Sometimes this strategy is echoed in the rhetoric of Edward Kennedy, who, in the hearings on the military gay ban, linked the gay rights agenda with the work of such disparate characters as John Kennedy, Cesar Chavez and Martin Luther King Jr. In other places, it is reflected in the fact that sexual orientation is simply added to the end of a list of minority conditions, in formulaic civil rights legislation. And this strategy makes a certain sense. Homosexuals are clearly subject to private discrimination in the same way as many other minorities; and linking the causes helps defuse some of the trauma that the subject of homosexuality raises. Liberal-

ism properly restricts itself to law—not culture—in addressing social problems; and by describing all homosexuals as a monolithic minority, it is able to avoid the complexities of the gay world as a whole, just as blanket civil rights legislation draws a veil over the varieties of black America by casting the question entirely in terms of non-black attitudes.

But this strategy is based on two assumptions: that sexuality is equivalent to race in terms of discrimination, and that the full equality of homosexuals can be accomplished by designating gay people as victims. Both are extremely dubious. And the consequence of

these errors is to mis-target the good that liberals are trying to do.

Consider the first. Two truths (at least) profoundly alter the way the process of discrimination takes place against homosexuals and against racial minorities and distinguish the history of racial discrimination in this country from the history of homophobia. Race is always visible; sexuality can be hidden. Race is in no way behavioral; sexuality, though distinct from sexual activity, is profoundly linked to a settled pattern of behavior.

For lesbians and gay men, the option of self-concealment has always existed and still exists, an option that means that in a profound way, discrimination against

them is linked to their own involvement, even acquiescence. Unlike blacks three decades ago, gay men and lesbians suffer no discernible communal economic deprivation and already operate at the highest levels of society: in boardrooms, governments, the media, the military, the law and industry. They may have advanced so far because they have not disclosed their sexuality, but their sexuality as such has not been an immediate cause for their disadvantage. In many cases, their sexuality is known, but it is disclosed at such a carefully calibrated level that it never actually works against them. At lower levels of society, the same pattern continues. As in the military, gay people are not uniformly discriminated against; *openly* gay people are.

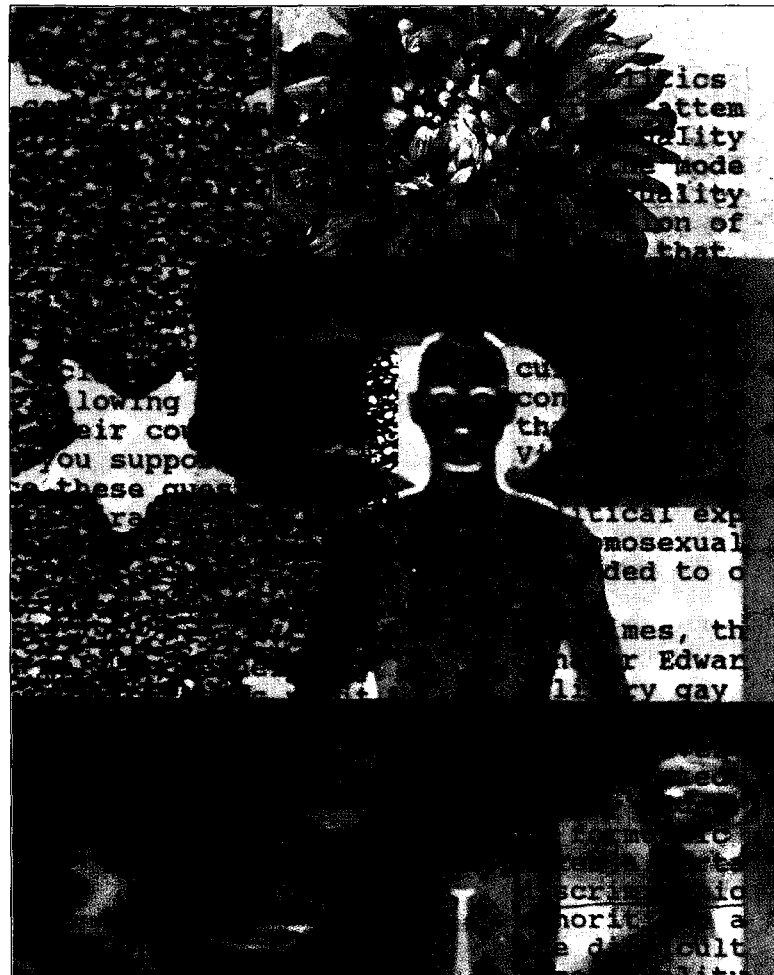


ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Moreover, unlike blacks or other racial minorities, gay people are not subject to inherited patterns of discrimination. When generation after generation is discriminated against, a cumulative effect of deprivation may take place, where the gradual immiseration of a particular ethnic group may intensify with the years. A child born into a family subject to decades of accumulated poverty is clearly affected by a past history of discrimination in terms of his or her race. But homosexuality occurs randomly anew with every generation. No sociological pattern can be deduced from it. Each generation gets a completely fresh start in terms of the socioeconomic conditions inherited from the family unit.

This is not to say that the psychological toll of homosexuality is less problematic than that of race, but that it is different: in some ways better; in others, worse. Because the stigma is geared toward behavior, the level of shame and collapse of self-esteem may be more intractable. To reach puberty and find oneself falling in love with members of one's own sex is to experience a mixture of self-discovery and self-disgust that never leaves a human consciousness. If the stigma is attached not simply to an obviously random characteristic, such as skin pigmentation, but to the deepest desires of the human heart, then it can eat away at a person's sense of his own dignity with peculiar ferocity. When a young person confronts her sexuality, she is also completely alone. A young heterosexual black or Latino girl invariably has an existing network of people like her to interpret, support and explain the emotions she feels when confronting racial prejudice for the first time. But a gay child generally has no one. The very people she would most naturally turn to—the family—may be the very people she is most ashamed in front of.

The stigma attached to sexuality is also different than that attached to race because it attacks the very heart of what makes a human being human: her ability to love and be loved. Even the most vicious persecution of racial minorities allowed, in many cases, for the integrity of the marital bond or the emotional core of a human being. When it did not, when Nazism split husbands from wives, children from parents, when apartheid or slavery broke up familial bonds, it was clear that a particularly noxious form of repression was taking place. But the stigma attached to homosexuality *begins* with such a repression. It forbids, at a child's earliest stage of development, the possibility of the highest form of human happiness. It starts with emotional terror and ends with mild social disapproval. It's no accident that, later in life, when many gay people learn to reconnect the bonds of love and sex, they seek to do so in private, even protected from the knowledge of their family.

This unique combination of superficial privilege, acquiescence in repression and psychological pain is a human mix no politics can easily tackle. But it is the mix liberalism must address if it is to reach its goal of using politics to ease human suffering. The internal inconsistency of this politics is that by relying on the regulation of private activity, it misses this its essential target—and

may even make matters worse. In theory, a human rights statute sounds like an ideal solution, a way for straights to express their concern and homosexuals to legitimate their identity. But in practice, it misses the point. It might grant workers a greater sense of security were they to come out in the office; and it might, by the publicity it generates, allow for greater tolerance and approval of homosexuality generally. But the real terror of coming out is deeper than economic security, and is not resolved by it; it is related to emotional and interpersonal dignity. However effective or comprehensive anti-discrimination laws are, they cannot reach far enough to tackle this issue; it is one that can only be addressed person by person, life by life, heart by heart.

For these reasons, such legislation rarely touches the people most in need of it: those who live in communities where disapproval of homosexuality is so intense that the real obstacles to advancement remain impervious to legal remedy. And even in major urban areas, it can be largely irrelevant. (On average some 1 to 2 percent of anti-discrimination cases have to do with sexual orientation; in Wisconsin, which has had such a law in force for more than a decade and is the largest case study, the figure is 1.1 percent.) As with other civil rights legislation, those least in need of it may take fullest advantage: the most litigious and articulate homosexuals, who would likely brave the harsh winds of homophobia in any case.

Anti-discrimination laws scratch the privileged surface, while avoiding the problematic depths. Like too many drugs for AIDS, they treat the symptoms of the homosexual problem without being anything like a cure; they may buy some time, and it is a cruel doctor who, in the face of human need, would refuse them. But they have about as much chance of tackling the deep roots of the gay-straight relationship as AZT has of curing AIDS. They want to substitute for the traumatic and difficult act of coming out the more formal and procedural act of legislation. But law cannot do the work of life. Even culture cannot do the work of life. Only life can do the work of life.

As the experience in Colorado and elsewhere shows, this strategy of using law to change private behavior also gives a fatal opening to the conservative politics of homosexuality. Civil rights laws essentially dictate the behavior of heterosexuals, in curtailing their ability to discriminate. They can, with justification, be portrayed as being an infringement of individual liberties. If the purpose of the liberal politics is to ensure the equality of homosexuals and their integration into society, it has thus achieved something quite peculiar. It has provided fuel for those who want to argue that homosexuals are actually seeking the infringement of heterosexuals' rights and the imposition of their values onto others. Much of this is propaganda, of course, and is fueled by fear and bigotry. But it works because it contains a germ of truth. Before most homosexuals have even come out of the closet, they are demanding concessions from the majority, including a clear curtailment of economic and social liberties, in order to ensure protections few of

them will even avail themselves of. It is no wonder there is opposition, or that it seems to be growing. Nine states now have propositions to respond to what they see as the "special rights" onslaught.

In the process, the liberal politics of homosexuality has also reframed the position of gays in relation to straights. It has defined them in a permanent supplicant status, seeing gay freedom as dependent on straight enlightenment, achievable only by changing the behavior of heterosexuals. The valuable political insight of radicalism is that this is a fatal step. It could enshrine forever the notion that gay people are a vulnerable group in need of protection. By legislating homosexuals as victims, it sets up a psychological dynamic of supplication that too often only perpetuates cycles of inadequacy and self-doubt. Like blacks before them, gay people may grasp at what seems to be an escape from the prison of self-hatred, only to find it is another prison of patronized victimology. By seeking salvation in the hands of others, they may actually entrench in law and in their minds the notion that their equality is dependent on the goodwill of their betters. It isn't. This may have made a good deal of sense in the case of American blacks, with a clear and overwhelming history of accumulated discrimination and a social ghetto that seemed impossible to breach. But for gay people—already prosperous, independent and on the brink of real integration—that lesson should surely now be learned. To place our self-esteem in the benevolent hands of contemporary liberalism is more than a mistake. It is a historic error.

V.

If there were no alternative to today's liberal politics of homosexuality, it should perhaps be embraced by default. But there is an alternative politics that is imaginable, which once too was called liberal. It begins with the view that for a small minority of people, homosexuality is an involuntary condition that can neither be denied nor permanently repressed. It adheres to an understanding that there is a limit to what politics can achieve in such an area, and trains its focus not on the behavior of private heterosexual citizens but on the actions of the public and allegedly neutral state. While it eschews the use of law to legislate culture, it strongly believes that law can affect culture indirectly. Its goal would be full civil equality for those who, through no fault of their own, happen to be homosexual; and would not deny homosexuals, as the other four politics do, their existence, integrity, dignity or distinctness. It would attempt neither to patronize nor to exclude.

This liberal politics affirms a simple and limited criterion: that all *public* (as opposed to private) discrimination against homosexuals be ended and that every right and responsibility that heterosexuals enjoy by virtue of the state be extended to those who grow up different. And that is all. No cures or re-educations; no wrenching civil litigation; no political imposition of tolerance; merely a political attempt to enshrine formal civil equal-

ity, in the hope that eventually, the private sphere will reflect this public civility. For these reasons, it is the only politics that actually tackles the core *political* problem of homosexuality and perhaps the only one that fully respects liberalism's public-private distinction. For these reasons, it has also the least chance of being adopted by gays and straights alike.

But is it impossible? By sheer circumstance, this politics has just been given its biggest boost since the beginning of the debate over the homosexual question. The military ban is by far the most egregious example of proactive government discrimination in this country. By conceding, as the military has done, the excellent service that many gay and lesbian soldiers have given to their country, the military has helped shatter a thousand stereotypes about their nature and competence. By focusing on the mere admission of homosexuality, the ban has purified the debate into a matter of the public enforcement of homophobia. Unlike anti-discrimination law, the campaign against the ban does not ask any private citizens to hire or fire anyone of whom they do not approve; it merely asks public servants to behave the same way with avowed homosexuals as with closeted ones.

Because of its timing, because of the way in which it has intersected with the coming of age of gay politics, the military debate has a chance of transforming the issue for good. Its real political power—and the real source of the resistance to it—comes from its symbolism. The acceptance of gay people at the heart of the state, at the core of the notion of patriotism, is anathema to those who wish to consign homosexuals to the margins of society. It offends conservatives by the simplicity of its demands, and radicals by the traditionalism of the gay people involved; it dismays moderates, who are forced publicly to discuss this issue for the first time; and it disorients liberals, who find it hard to fit the cause simply into the rubric of minority politics. For instead of seeking access, as other minorities have done, gays in the military are simply demanding recognition. They start not from the premise of supplication, but of success, of proven ability and prowess in battle, of exemplary conduct and ability. This is a new kind of minority politics. It is less a matter of complaint than of pride; less about subversion than about the desire to contribute equally.

The military ban also forces our society to deal with the real issues at stake in dealing with homosexuals. The country has been forced to discuss sleeping arrangements, fears of sexual intimidation, the fraught emotional relations between gays and straights, the violent reaction to homosexuality among many young males, the hypocrisy involved in much condemnation of gays and the possible psychological and emotional syndromes that make homosexuals allegedly unfit for service. Like a family engaged in the first, angry steps toward dealing with a gay member, the country has been forced to debate a subject honestly—even calmly—in a way it never has before. This is a clear and enormous

gain. Whatever the result of this process, it cannot be undone.

But the critical measure necessary for full gay equality is something deeper and more emotional perhaps than even the military. It is equal access to marriage. As with the military, this is a question of formal public discrimination. If the military ban deals with the heart of what it is to be a citizen, the marriage ban deals with the core of what it is to be a member of civil society. Marriage is not simply a private contract; it is a social and public recognition of a private commitment. As such it is the highest public recognition of our personal integrity. Denying it to gay people is the most public affront possible to their civil equality.

This issue may be the hardest for many heterosexuals to accept. Even those tolerant of homosexuals may find this institution so wedded to the notion of heterosexual commitment that to extend it would be to undo its very essence. And there may be religious reasons for resisting this that require far greater discussion than I can give them here. But *civilly* and *emotionally*, the case is compelling. The heterosexuality of marriage is civilly intrinsic only if it is understood to be inherently procreative; and that definition has long been abandoned in civil society. In contemporary America, marriage has become a way in which the state recognizes an emotional and economic commitment of two people to each other for life. No law requires children to consummate it. And within that definition, there is no civil way it can logically be denied homosexuals, except as a pure gesture of public disapproval. (I leave aside here the thorny issue of adoption rights, which I support in full. They are not the same as the right to marriage and can be legislated, or not, separately.)

In the same way, emotionally, marriage is characterized by a kind of commitment that is rare even among heterosexuals. Extending it to homosexuals need not dilute the special nature of that commitment, unless it is understood that gay people, by their very nature, are incapable of it. History and experience suggest the opposite. It is not necessary to prove that gay people are more or less able to form long-term relationships than straights for it to be clear that, at least, *some* are. Giving these people a right to affirm their commitment doesn't reduce the incentive for heterosexuals to do the same, and even provides a social incentive for lesbians and gay men to adopt socially beneficial relationships.

But for gay people, it would mean far more than simple civil equality. The vast majority of us—gay and straight—are brought up to understand that the apex of emotional life is found in the marital bond. It may not be something we achieve, or even ultimately desire, but its very existence premises the core of our emotional development. It is the architectonic institution that frames our emotional life. The marriages of others are a moment for celebration and self-affirmation; they are the way in which our families and friends reinforce us as human beings. Our parents consider our emotional

lives to be more important than our professional ones, because they care about us at our core, not at our periphery. And it is not hard to see why the marriage of an offspring is often regarded as the high point of any parent's life.

Gay people always know this essential affirmation will be denied them. Thus their relationships are given no anchor, no endpoint, no way of integrating them fully into the network of family and friends that makes someone a full member of civil society. Even when those relationships become essentially the same—or even stronger—than straight relationships, they are never accorded the dignity of actual equality. Husbands remain “friends”; wives remain “partners.” The very language sends a powerful signal of fault, a silent assumption of internal disorder or insufficiency. The euphemisms—and the brave attempt to pretend that gay people don't need marriage—do not successfully conceal the true emotional cost and psychological damage that this signal exacts. No true progress in the potential happiness of gay teenagers or in the stability of gay adults or in the full integration of gay and straight life is possible, or even imaginable, without it.

These two measures—simple, direct, requiring no change in heterosexual behavior and no sacrifice from heterosexuals—represent a politics that tackles the heart of homophobia while leaving homophobes their freedom. It allows homosexuals to define their own future and their own identity and does not place it in the hands of the other. It makes a clear, public statement of equality, while leaving all the inequalities of emotion and passion to the private sphere, where they belong. It does not legislate private tolerance, it declares public equality. It banishes the paradigm of victimology and replaces it with one of integrity. It requires one further step, of course, which is to say the continuing effort for honesty on the part of homosexuals themselves. This is not easily summed up in the crude phrase “coming out”; but it finds expression in the myriad ways in which gay men and lesbians talk, engage, explain, confront and seek out the other. Politics cannot substitute for this; heterosexuals cannot provide it. And, while it is not in some sense fair that homosexuals have to initiate the dialogue, it is a fact of life. Silence, if it does not equal death, equals the living equivalent.

It is not the least of the ironies of this politics that its objectives are in some sense not political at all. The family is prior to the liberal state; the military is coincident with it. Heterosexuals would not conceive of such rights as things to be won, but as things that predate modern political discussion. But it says something about the unique status of homosexuals in our society that we now have to be political in order to be prepolitical. Our battle is not for political victory but for personal integrity. Just as many of us had to leave our families in order to join them again, so now as citizens, we have to embrace politics, if only ultimately to be free of it. Our lives may have begun in simplicity, but they have not ended there. Our dream, perhaps, is that they might. •

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Stars Dance

Silence. Black screen. Three words appear—"Sigh no more," the opening of the lovely song in the play. The rest of the words then follow, and Emma Thompson's voice begins to speak them. The film cuts to a glorious Tuscan hillside, with a picnic of ladies and a few old men spread upon it and with Thompson, nestled in a tree, reading the song from a book.

As she finishes, a messenger arrives to report that Don Pedro and friends are returning from the wars. Then far below we see a group of galloping riders. Patrick Doyle's score surges in. The ladies rush to bathe and prepare. Under the opening titles, the horsemen arrive and plunge into *their* baths. And Kenneth Branagh's film of **Much Ado About Nothing** (Samuel Goldwyn) is off to a marvelous start.

If Branagh accomplishes nothing better in his film-directing career—and why shouldn't he do more?—his *Henry V* and *Much Ado* will lodge him securely in the world's gratitude. *Much Ado*, for reasons given below, is not quite up to the level of *Henry*, but once again Branagh has adapted Shakespeare dexterously. Once again he has followed Granville Barker's advice about pace in Shakespeare, understanding that the essence of pace is not speed but energy. Once again he has excellent colleagues off-camera, most notably Doyle, that open-throated composer, and the editor Andrew Marcus, who knows how to tip in glimpses of others to give dialogues a balletic lift. Once again Branagh has his attractive self on screen. Once again—and may I live to type these words a hundred times

more—there is Emma Thompson.

Much Ado, as many have noted, is a peculiar play. First, there's the title. It's both a modest shrug of the author at his own brilliance and an Elizabethan joke. "Nothing" was probably pronounced "noting," which was a synonym for eavesdropping. But the chief problem is that the two most interesting characters are only marginally in the main plot. That plot is about the Claudio-Hero-Don John tangle, which is less interesting.

Shakespeare began (we can imagine) with a woman and a man, Beatrice and Benedick, who duel verbally because they enjoy their antagonism and tacitly respect each other for it; and whose facade of mutual dislike is cracked by scheming friends so that the pair are forced to confess their love for each other. But if the author had left it at that, the play would have been less than half as long as it needed to be for his theater.

So, to fill it out, he adapted a plot from several previous works about a

maiden, a cousin of Beatrice, falsely accused of lewdness. He interwove it with the Beatrice-Benedick story, using the false-identity device that he later used in *Othello*, adding the dead-woman-turned-to-life idea that he used again in *The Winter's Tale*, and working in some bits with a comic constable whose stupidity delays the truth about the maiden. Thus he put together a full-length entertainment for the Globe Theater.

But, in one sense, to no avail. The interesting characters are still Beatrice and Benedick. (Which is why Berlioz called his opera by their names.) In any production those two performances must carry the play; and in this film, the two performances are, in quite different ways, absolutely scintillating. Branagh is feisty, persistent, lucid, completely taking. The one thing he is not is elegant: he has few traces of a Renaissance gentleman. But he has the magical ability to blend a modern-day persona with consummate ease in Shakespearean language and action.

As for Thompson... I'll try to restrain myself. She *has* elegance. She has the finest command of inflection and style. She has spirit and soul. She is the first film actress since Katharine Hepburn to make intelligence sexy. She lets us understand that Beatrice, much like Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*, behaves as she does because she is employing the only means available to break out of the expected pattern—daddy's girl up for marital auction.

Thompson's Beatrice implies that, much as she loves her cousin Hero, the maligned virgin, she couldn't possibly behave in Hero's docile, male-determined way. She makes herself thorny to the man she wants, and she does it gaily. When Thompson says, "Then there was a star danced, and under that was I born," we can see galaxies wheeling.

There's more. After Hero's erstwhile fiancé, Claudio, has excoriated her (and we know she's innocent), Benedick asks the shocked Beatrice, loyal to her cousin, what he can do for her. Thomp-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Groundhog Day. *Pennsylvania.* Bill Murray is good, surprise, in an amusing fantasy, surprise, about a weatherman trapped for dozens of days in one day. (Reviewed 3/15/93) **The Last Days of Chez Nous.** *Australia.* Lovely women surround Bruno Ganz in this generally successful ragout of family troubles. (3/29/93) **Rich in Love.** *South Carolina.* A gentle and intelligent sojourn with a man and two grown daughters, as they all discover themselves after the woman of the house takes off. Albert Finney heads—really heads—an endearing cast. (4/5/93) **Stolen Children.** *Italy.* An unsentimental, deeply moving account of an 11-year-old girl, prostituted by her mother, who is sent with her younger brother from Milan to a children's home in Sicily. A young policeman escorts them. Gianni Amelio directs compassionately. (3/22/93) —SK

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Stock Market
Investors Who
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It Tip Pays Off

BY MORRIS
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
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What's News—

Business and Finance

TOBACCO COMPANIES can be sued by smokers who allege the firms hid or distorted the health dangers of cigarettes, the Supreme Court ruled, exposing the industry to the risk of huge jury awards. The 7-2 decision may hurt other industries as well. But cigarette makers, citing a narrow part of the ruling, hailed it as a victory.

(Article in Column 6)

Imports of Japanese minivans don't harm U.S. auto makers, a federal trade panel ruled. The ruling, a sharp setback for Detroit's Big Three, means Toyota and Mazda minivans won't be subject to stiff duties.

Sales of U.S.-made cars dipped in mid-June from their already-sluggish rate of the previous 30 days.

(Articles on Pages A3 and A7)

Freight railroads halted operations in response to a strike against one rail line, causing Amtrak to suspend much of its service. But the Amtrak unions delayed a strike, keeping its busy Northeast corridor open. Car makers could curtail operations if freight service doesn't resume.

World-Wide

THE JUSTICES STRUCK a 30-year ban on worship. The Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, declined to allow the government to ban religious activities, declining to allow involvement with the 5-4, that the public danger of religion, which Amendment, offered by a Island, (Ar Mon genera with to men

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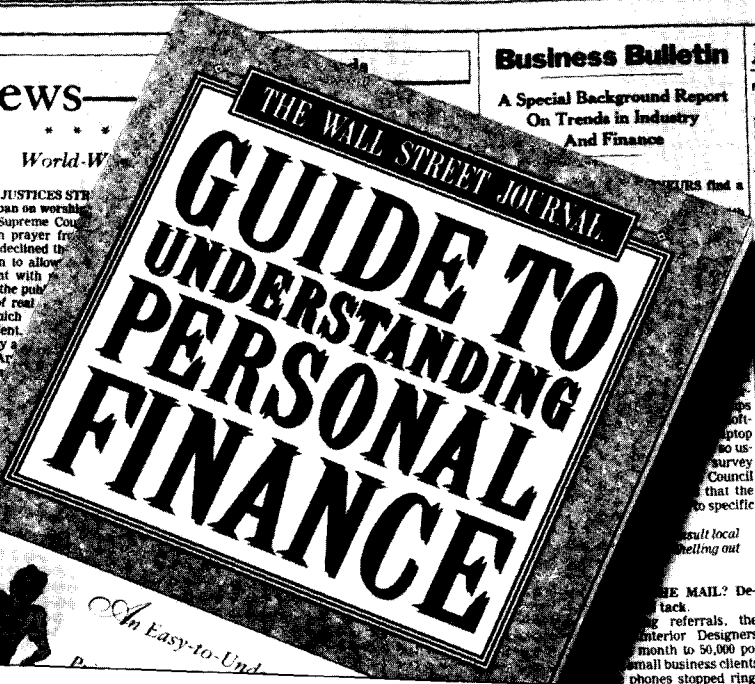
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son then speaks the two words with which Ellen Terry is said to have stabbed the audience with ice: "Kill Claudio." Ellen, thou shouldst be living at this hour—to hear Emma.

The entire play/film, dark strands and all, is enclosed in an atmosphere of celebration, a festival for returning warriors. This festive air is well dramatized in Phyllis Dalton's summery costumes: most of the women's dresses and men's uniforms are off-white. Many of the actors, too, "furnish" the screen appealingly: Kate Beckinsale as the pretty puppet Hero, Richard Briers as her father, Brian Blessed as his brother, Imelda Staunton as Hero's attendant who is unknowingly used to entrap her mistress.

But there are four lapses in the casting, three unfortunate and one dire. All are American. Robert Sean Leonard, squint-eyed, plays Claudio not quite tolerably—pale both in love and in hate. Keanu Reeves, as the villainous Don John, knows all his lines and speaks them clearly and gives the sort of performance that makes parents beam at college productions. Denzel Washington plays the prince of the returning warriors. I was advocating colorblind casting some thirty years ago, always with the proviso that a black actor in a white role should demonstrate by talent that the producer would have been misguided not to use him or her. That was in the theater. The proviso, for obvious rea-

sons, is even more pressing in film. Washington is barely adequate, with little of the princely bearing that he showed in *Malcolm X*.

The disaster is Michael Keaton as Dogberry. I simply have no idea of what he was doing, what person he was trying to play. His painful performance proves yet again that Shakespeare's low-comedy characters need clowns, actors who are funny in themselves before they begin their parts.

Someone like Joe Pesci might possibly have had the shick to do the thick-headed constable. But Keaton is just a straight actor, sweatily trying to be funny—with muggings, long pauses and an ire that may be meant as comic but seems Keaton's attempt to hide the fear that he is failing.

What was the reason for the casting of these Americans? Was it to "internationalize" the film, as a bow to the coproducers, American Playhouse? If so, it was self-evidently shortsighted. We could have seen the forest better without those four trees.

It's hardly a minor defect—four misjudged pieces of casting in prominent roles. But Branagh and Thompson and sixteen other actors, Doyle's enrapturing music and Branagh's cinematic grip of the play—inventive, lithe, somehow *Shakespearean*—are splendid. This *Much Ado* is a flawed gem. Certainly, regretably, flawed; still, a gem. •

The notion is obvious enough, and admittedly it is of limited utility. (It should not be used as a single truth itself.) But in recent years, as, say, various forms of absolutist religious practice begin to seem as great a threat as fascism and communism in the past, such thoughts become inescapable. In his swashbuckling polemic, Robert Hughes doesn't frame his arguments in the terms that I have suggested, but such a distinction hovers in the background. Among other things, the book fights off the many forms of the *unum necessarium* as they are cropping up in—of all places—America. Hughes makes an impassioned argument against parochialism of every sort: against ethnic chauvinists of the right, and left-wing, post-Marxist Marxists in the universities and art conceived as therapeutic lessons in civic virtue. In the place of such follies, Hughes asserts a refurbished, strenuous new version of pluralism, a call to critical intelligence and critical sympathy. For Americans, the book is simultaneously a kick in the seat and a shot in the arm.

For years liberal intellectuals in this country have sounded sickly and confused, half convinced that their privileged position has disqualified them from criticizing any less powerful group, afraid of asserting what might be seen as an advantage. Something like academic Afrocentrism may be largely nonsense, but how many have the stomach to attack it? How many have the courage to say that gay artists whose lives have become nightmarish from the fear of AIDS are not necessarily better painters or sculptors? Putting it in pragmatic terms: Is making such points worth the risk of sounding like Hilton Kramer? Even if you can avoid such a ghastly outcome, the task requires a relish for combat and a willingness to hit an open target—a sort of herculean insensitivity.

Enter the bull in the shopping mall. Hughes was born in Australia but has lived in America and written art criticism for *Time* since 1970. He combines the curiosity and the ambitious learning of a scholar (he has written distinguished books on Australia and Barcelona) and the ready indignation and sense of timing of a great journalist. He is a controversialist, a public intellectual. The book, written in 1992, as the political tide was turning, is implicitly addressed to liberals: You are the conscience of a great country. Why be so frightened? Hughes offers a guide for the perplexed, a moral and intellectual compass for those who want to remain liberals in this culture without giving up their standards, their

The Bull in the Shopping Mall

BY DAVID DENBY

Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America by Robert Hughes

(Oxford University Press / New York Public Library, 210 pp., \$19.95)

Let me take an early stab at millennial journalism with the following gross proposition: the real division of the twentieth century is not between Communist and capitalist countries, or even between rich and poor ones. The real division of the century is between people who live under the aegis of what Matthew Arnold, in *Culture and Anarchy*, called the *unum necessarium*, or one thing needful—the single truth, the single rule that explains everything and gives all things meaning—and those who inhabit nations that acknowledge many truths, many necessities.

The last group is now in perpetual

intellectual trouble, buffeted by "relativists" as well as by would-be authoritarians of all sorts. In contemporary terms, the single truth might be that your possession of God justifies the murder of those who do not possess God, that it legitimizes, in fact, your own acts, no matter how violent, and delegitimizes all your enemy's acts, no matter how peaceful; it might be that your ethnic background or skin color explains everything worth knowing about your identity and your culture; it might be that class relations or, bringing things up to date, some such recently fetishized matrix as "power" or "language" provides the key to all thought.

education, their sense of what matters. Brandishing his sword, he charges in, laying about on all sides. He ridicules the American touchiness, the querulous tone of grievance. He talks tough to self-pitying artists, to academics, to black intellectuals and ideologues, to politicians.

His book was originally developed, a little over a year ago, as a series of lectures at the New York Public Library; the lectures have now been fleshed out and updated. I heard two of them and greatly enjoyed Hughes's robust theatricality. It is the style of wit, of Shaw and Wilde—the British lecture hall when the lecture was still the most glamorous and powerful means of communication. Alas, when encountered between covers, the entertainer's public manner palls somewhat, and at times Hughes disports himself heavily. The first lecture, "Culture and the Broken Polity," has an overture of sorts that gets the book off badly. Some of the early blasts, a compilation of follies and buffooneries from the late '80s and early '90s, are too easily written:

Unlike Caligula, the emperor [i.e., Bush] does not appoint his horse consul; he puts him in charge of the environment, or appoints him to the Supreme Court. Mainly it is women who object, for due to the prevalence of mystery-religions the men are off in the woods, affirming their manhood by sniffing one another's armpits and listening to third-rate poets rant about the moist, hairy satyr that lives inside each one of them. Those who crave the return of the Delphic sibyl get Shirley MacLaine, and a 35,000-year-old Cro-Magnon warrior named Ramatha takes up residence inside a blond housewife on the West Coast, generating millions of cult dollars in seminars, tapes and books.

This paragraph strikes me as almost repellent in its noisy brio. Can Hughes really be angry about these things? He sounds quite happy relishing idiocy—rather like a man celebrating, before sleep perhaps, the many stupid things that have buoyed his mood throughout the day. The wit is completely externalized (he's a bit of a talking horse himself) and more a function of his ear for rhythm, which never fails him, than of thought.

He blusters his way through some conventional positions, assuring us he's an O.K. guy on AIDS and abortion, that he's against prejudice, that he doesn't admire Patrick Buchanan or creationism, that Reaganism as a T.V. phenomenon was bad for the republic. Do we need the mighty Hughes for this? His point, I suppose, is that educated people can no longer take for granted the essen-

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tial sanity of their country. In particular, too many American groups have become hooked on the linked self-dramatizing myths of victimization and redemption. True, but anyone likely to read the book has heard this before. The darting collection of "*touchés*" begins to sound a little too much like a well-written news-magazine cover story. In this initial section, Hughes makes copious use (some acknowledged, some not) of other essayists and reporters, including Arthur Schlesinger Jr., E.J. Dionne, Louis Menand, Katha Pollitt, David Rieff, John Taylor, Michael Thomas and (I dare say) the voice of this magazine.

At times Hughes appears to be pinching himself to be sure that he's not dreaming. The America that he loves is coming apart at the seams. He begins with the assumption that America is devoted to a radical idea. We are formed by a creed of individualism, equality and freedom born of immigration. There never was an earlier America where everyone looked and thought alike. We have to love and to respect each other's differences. Hughes obviously enjoys as well as deplores the American mess, the vituperative jostling of ethnic groups, the entrepreneurial mania that turns everything into spectacle. But the country is now badly "frayed."

The widespread and unstoppable confusion of formal equality (which is obtainable through law) with equality of power and gifts (which is unobtainable) has led to a kind of Tocquevilian nightmare, a culture of self-pity and envious accusation. In the art world, for instance, the overproduction of artists caused by the runaway art market of the '80s and the general lowering of standards leads anyone not actually celebrated by the media to designate himself an aggrieved party. "What are your 'standards' but further oppression?" the victim demands. The "you" that figures in so much paranoid-accusatory rhetoric is, of course, the white heterosexual male, whose "standards," a mere construction, are assumed to be inher-

ently corrupted by power. Second, the exacerbation of the differences among us, and the cynically calculated omission of what is held in common, leads to a grim spirit of intolerance—declarations of "cultural war" on the right and calls for separatism on the African-American left. Ideology annihilates the compromises necessary to keep the country going.

Politically correct speech is no more than a panicky reaction to the widening fissures, a denial of reality in a rush of nearly hysterical *politesse*:



ROBERT HUGHES BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

We want to create a sort of linguistic Lourdes, where evil and misfortune are dispelled by a dip in the waters of euphemism. Does the cripple rise from his wheelchair, or feel better about being stuck in it, because someone back in the days of the Carter administration decided that, for official purposes, he was "physically challenged"?... The notion that you change a situation by finding a newer and nicer word for it emerges from the old American habit of euphemism, circumlocution and desperate confusion about etiquette, produced by fear that the concrete will give offense. And it is a peculiarly American habit. The call for politically correct language, though some answer it in England, has virtually no resonance in Europe.

Hughes fears no man or woman, but most liberals shrink from hurting anyone's feelings. That is why James Wolcott was being disingenuous when, in the course of defending Rush Limbaugh recently in *The New Yorker*, he called on liberals to stop whining and "lean into the microphone." In other words, get your own demagogues, bullies and wits. But as Wolcott surely knows, American liberals have committed themselves to abandoning the narcissism of the tribe; they are committed to respecting every group in the country. If conservatives

have been making most of the jokes in recent years, that's because it's so much easier for them. For the liberal, everyone matters. That is the American glory and the American horror.

The queasiness and prissy-mouthed grayness are often produced by the highest motives. During a year spent at Columbia attending classes with first- and second-year students, I saw many a promising discussion of social issues dry up at the border of genuine disagreement. As soon as a student actually said anything, he or she would be greeted with the comment (from another student), "That may be true from your point of view . . .," the implication being that a point of view is not a strength but a weakness. Students quickly learn to stay away from anything that might betray a social judgment. The conservative students retreat into a grouchy silence and probably listen

to Limbaugh in the dorms. The liberals take up a right-minded droning politeness; they learn that the only safe thing to do is to attack "power."

They were, of course, only imitating their betters. The post-structuralist jargon, it turns out, serves all too well to reinforce liberal squeamishness. According to the recent academic orthodoxy (and Columbia is far less orthodox in these matters than many other schools), as soon as you write or speak you are in danger of allowing language, which encodes the structures of power, to do your thinking for you. In practice, any kind of vivid or concrete speech—any-

thing personal, physical, evocative, active—"privileges" one point of view or another. (A graduate student in English upbraided me for saying that a female student with long hair had long hair. Even though I was describing a specific student, the description was "a limiting stereotype.")

The many academics who take refuge in the seeming neutrality of jargon have become so conscious of language as power that they disempower their own words. Perhaps not even Orwell anticipated that the destruction of English would be completed as a philosophical and political necessity. The result is that intelligible discussion of anything important is often left to dopes, who are rarely burdened by self-consciousness, or to the right, which is all too happy to use language as power, which is the way they have always used it.

As a journalist on campus, I was shocked to discover that parts of the academy were more abjectly under the sway of fashion than journalism itself. (My tawdry profession has seemed at times a bastion of classical cultural values.) Hughes's critique of the university is fueled by the scorn of a journalist-scholar who is, by temperament, a man of action. He dismisses charges (made by, among others, Eugene Genovese in these pages) that the reign of political correctness amounts to a McCarthyism of the left. Yes, there have been pressures, but tenured faculty have not been fired or hauled before congressional committees. And he insists that the recent campus radicalism in the history and English departments is a trivial affair, more a question of career scrambling than ideological commitment.

How strange the graduate student's sense that he is engaged in a radical activity. By arguing that truth is unknowable and all utterances are suspect, the post-structuralists have doomed their own language to nullity. How can anyone working with such an assumption possibly challenge the status quo? The real action is elsewhere:

In the late '80s, while American academics were empty theorizing that language and the thinking subject were dead, the longing for freedom and humanistic culture was demolishing the very pillars of European tyranny. Of course, if the Chinese students had read their Foucault they would have known that repression is inscribed in all language, their own included, and so they could have saved themselves the trouble of facing the tanks in Tiananmen Square. But did Vaclav Havel and his fellow playwrights, intellectuals and poets free Czechoslovakia by quoting Derrida or Lyotard on the inscrutability of texts? Assuredly not: they

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THE LANGUAGE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITYSM

did it by placing their faith in the transforming power of thought—by putting their shoulders to the immense wheel of the word. The world changes more deeply, widely, thrillingly than at any moment since 1917, perhaps since 1848, and the American academic left keeps fretting about how phallogentrism is inscribed in Dickens's portrait of Little Nell.

Dropping in on the university, Hughes feels like "Gulliver visiting the Royal Academy of Lagado." Yet he is no William Bennett or George Will, baiting the left and hoping to freeze the curriculum of the 1950s. He praises the many recent examples of "history from the bottom" and also the works that demythicize the American West—scholarship that retrieves the forgotten experience of minorities, or recasts the history of the frontier as a dynamic exchange among Anglo-American, Hispanic and Indian cultures. Most of this work comes from the left. Throughout his book, he does an awkwardly strenuous dance, jumping back and forth between ridiculing what is merely modish and ideological and celebrating what is genuinely a liberation. The second lecture, "Multi-Culti and its Discontents," is almost heroic in its willingness to read everything, consider everything. For a liberal, the price of wit is eternal vigilance.

Hughes distinguishes between the good forms and the bad forms of multiculturalism. The good kind requires curiosity—the desire to look across borders "without prejudice or illusion" and to study the border itself, the intermingling of cultures, "where some of the most interesting things happen." Without it, multiethnic societies cannot survive. His own Australia, for instance. Hughes's education in the early '50s was "monocultural": "[We were] raised . . . to be little Englishmen and Englishwomen, though with nasal accents." England was Eden, England was history—the "anglo-Oz" worshiped on bent knees by an "awkward, imaginatively impoverished country." Nearby Asia was the "Far East," and everything local was ignored or put into a box marked "anthropology." Strenuously taught by the Jesuit fathers of his native Sydney, Hughes read the Greek and Latin classics and English poetry and history, and was forced to memorize long passages.

He defends this education, and the "hegemonical" Western tradition in general, on two grounds. The rigors of such an education did not prevent him from rejecting what was most limited and narrow in the education itself; a base was placed under his feet from whose solid fundament he was able to see clearly

other cultures and the buried history of his own country. In recent decades, the Australian cultural situation, shaped by official government policy, has shown a marked improvement: Anglocentrism died, the land and literature and history of the place were revived (not least by Hughes) and so, in Australia, "no Utopia but a less truculent immigrant society than [America], intelligent multiculturalism works to everyone's social advantage."

Americans are incurious and they don't read much; they can't see the rest of the world and they can't see each other very well. Yet some form of multiculturalism, Hughes insists, is the wave of the future here, and justifiably so. We will always need elites, and the future of American elites, "in a globalized economy without a cold war, will lie with people who can think and act with informed grace across ethnic, cultural, linguistic lines." This requires not only the recognition of difference, but the acknowledgment that "differences are not divagations from a European norm, but structures eminently worth knowing about for their own sake." Without mutual respect, we will fall into the hands of separatists and paranoids eager to promote the war of all against all: America-Herzegovina.

None of this, however, can be used as an argument for dropping the Western classics from the curriculum. On the contrary, Hughes is all in favor of undergraduates absorbing as much of "the canon" as they can. Although reading must be expansive—"The key words must be 'both/and' not 'either/or'"—the base must be firm before the student looks elsewhere. Hughes's sword falls unflinchingly on contrary claims. Democratic ideals, he insists, do not hail from Asia or Africa, or from the Iroquois; great literatures cannot be devalued on the grounds that they fail to live up to the reformist impulses of the moment. And in the present, no writer can escape the single standard of implacable judgment:

The sense of quality, of style, of measure is not an imposition bearing on literature from the domain of class, race or gender. It lives independently of group stereotype. Every writer carries in his or her mind an invisible tribunal of dead writers, whose appointment is an imaginative act and not merely a browbeaten response to some notion of authority. This tribunal sits in judgment on our own work. We intuit our standards from it. From its unenforceable verdict, there is no appeal. None of our tricks—not our fetishization of the personal, not our attempts to shift the aesthetic onto the political, not our exhausted fictions of avant-gardism—will make it go

away. Not if we are frank with ourselves. If the tribunal weren't there, every first draft would be a final manuscript. You can't fool Mother Culture.

These thrusts appear aimed at mealy-mouthed "relativists" who might try to sneak up along Hughes's side and hide behind his shield. At the same time, however, post-structuralists will say that Hughes is speaking in tautologies, that standards and the sense of truth are both illusions, that he is merely replicating the centralized structure of power while asking, in his plea for enlightened multiculturalism, for its dispersion. He makes no answer to these likely charges because (I assume) his entire book is his answer. As Hughes makes his way through his necessarily complex arguments, *Culture of Complaint* is filled with the clamor of many texts, many cultures, many styles of art combining and parting. He offers not a theory but an example, a man reading and judging. Without belief in standards and truth, a culture dies. It becomes what we are moving toward now: a welter of aggrieved claims, extraordinary cynicism and mere "indecisive mush."

Turning to the bad multiculturalism—the kind that leads to separatist demands—he directs his greatest contempt toward those who are consciously reshaping the past for ideological purpose while ignoring the issue of truth. The indifference to truth, as encoded in the notorious Portland African-American Baseline Essays, could do some serious mischief. If students are willing to believe that not only human life (which anthropologists think began in the Rift Valley), but all Western culture, derives from Africa; that the Greeks took from Egypt, a "black" nation, much that the Greeks have been credited with originating; that European culture, in brief, was "stolen" from Africa—as if it were a trunk of jewels taken off by pirates—then such students may have a righteous and self-justifying reason not to study a standard curriculum. Or they will study with a balky sense that they are being colonized by learning. In an advanced industrial economy, such a withdrawal could cause black students to become cruelly marginalized.

After acknowledging the racism inherent in many nineteenth- and twentieth-century studies of Africa, Hughes goes through the claims of Afrocentrism and dismisses them. And so with the Afrocentrist version of slavery. After insisting that no history of slavery written before about 1960 can be quite trusted to tell the truth about black cultural history, he shreds the Afrocentrist insistence that

Europe was solely responsible for the slave trade, filling in the large role played before and after the European-dominated slave trade by Muslim slave traders and by African tribes themselves. And he dispels the notion of an African Eden, either of the past or the present, to which African Americans can return.

What he doesn't acknowledge is that Afrocentrism may survive without being fully believed. At Columbia, in the wake of a rampaging, nonsensical lecture by Professor Leonard Jeffries of City College, I noticed that even some of the brightest African-American students to whom I talked were unwilling to dismiss the stuff out of hand. They half-believed in it, perhaps as a way of maintaining self-respect. They may have been heading, most of them, for mainstream academic and professional careers, but by talking Afrocentrism they were not selling out to whiteness.

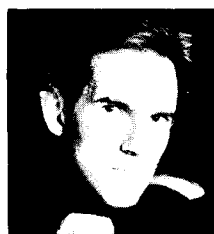
The good sense of Hughes's polemical moves may be self-evident to many readers, but I have been rehearsing them (without doing justice to his richly detailed argument) because I have the impression that many liberals, black and white, have lost heart and will do anything to avoid an argument on such touchy issues. Hughes's remarks may be obvious, but in *The New Yorker* and *The New York Review of Books* the liberal candor required to make such "obvious" distinctions is not easy to come by; on the subject of race, avoidance is more the rule. Yet unless liberals lose their fears and speak up, some bizarre fantasies may soon be widely regarded as truth—the claims for black superiority, for instance, which are only the latest bastard offspring of the crackpot racial theories of the nineteenth century, or the disastrous implication in the Baseline Essays that blacks "process information differently" from whites, which is precisely the kind of spurious racial distinction that has always been used against blacks.

Hughes demonstrates only passing interest (in this book, anyway) in people's feelings or needs—in the way that fantasy, for instance, can serve as compensation and redemption. He takes the hard line. Nothing justifies the lie of an invented past; nothing but sentimental chauvinism can be built on such lies. And he takes a similar hard line, in the last lecture, on the "therapeutic soulcraft" that passes in the art world for curatorial taste and increasingly for criticism. In a few pages, Hughes brilliantly traces the way the religious and moralistic claims for art in nineteenth-century America turn up again, transformed but still richly sanctimonious, in the language of

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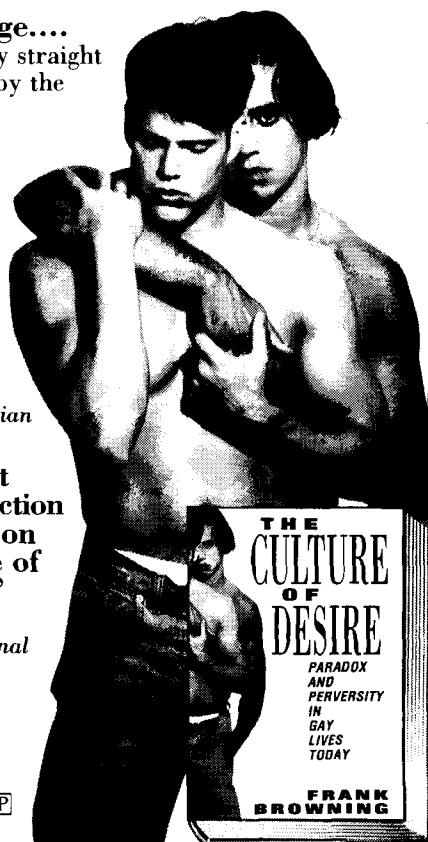
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The old avant-garde battle cry of art for art's sake has long been abandoned. The new assumption (and the current Whitney Biennial, opening just as Hughes's book was published, is a *summa* of everything he is deploring) is that art is the place to overthrow oppression, the arena in which to assert the ethnic, sexual or gender claims that have been denied by the power structure. Increasingly, the work that emerges from such thinking is marked by the pretentious ineptitudes of "victim art" or the "deadening sentimentality" of institutional multiculturalism. A recent NEA pamphlet, as if to do penance for the Mapplethorpe affair, spoke of support for "Hmong needlework, coastal sea-grass basketry, south-east Alaska native dance, American Indian basketry and woodcraft, Pacific Island canoe building and Appalachian banjo-playing." Few senators could find fault with any of *that*. And few people who love the art of Eakins, Hopper or Pollock could find it very interesting either. In America, high culture could disappear altogether in a tidal wave of victim art and subsidized arts-and-crafts programs:

There is a right jaw of the vise, and a left one, and between the two the museum is painfully squeezed and may in the end be distorted out of useful shape. These pressures are far more extreme in the United States than in any European country I know of. They are the result of a totalization of political influence, a belief—common to both left and right—that no sphere of public culture should be exempt from political pressure, since everything in it supposedly boils down to politics anyway.

The various forms of the *unum necessarium* raise their banners. If culture is not to go down before them, something like a three-dimensional intellectual world must be restored. Hughes's unadmitted ambition is nothing less than to save the soul of the republic with cultural criticism. Even if some of his book is blustery or not of the first freshness, it summarizes and restates with exuberant wit what may be a new consensus of resistance. Hughes may not save culture, but he might save journalism, which is a beginning. His contemporaries should be grateful to him, for he has produced an inescapably quotable bible of intellectual common sense.

DAVID DENBY, film critic of *New York* magazine, is working on a book about rereading the classics.

The Max Factor

BY DAVID CANNADINE

Lord Beaverbrook: A Life by Anne Chisholm and Michael Davie

(Knopf, 589 pp., \$30)

William Maxwell Aitken, first Baron Beaverbrook, wielded a considerable influence on the affairs of Britain and its empire for more than fifty years—an influence that was invariably vigorous, but only intermittently benevolent. He was a self-made millionaire from Canada, with a remarkable flair for business and finance. He became the chief proprietor of Express Newspapers, and thus one of the foremost English press barons of his time. He was a buccaneering politician, who shared with Churchill the unique distinction of having been a member of *both* British War Cabinets.

He was also a successful, if self-serving, contemporary historian, whose books give a graphic picture of the great events with which he was involved. And the range of his friendships was extraordinarily wide, including Lloyd George and Rudyard Kipling, Anceurin Bevan and Lady Ewina Mountbatten, Brendan Bracken and the Duke of Windsor. Although himself a diminutive figure, he was an outsized personality, who might have stepped out of the pages of a twentieth-century novel. Indeed, such was Beaverbrook's fame, fortune and fascination that on several occasions he did precisely that—as Arnold Bennett's Lord Raingo, as Rebecca West's Francis Pitt, as H.G. Wells's Mr. Parham, as William Gerhardie's Lord Ottercove and as Evelyn Waugh's Lord Copper.

For a man whose long and eventful life regularly blurred the boundaries between fact and fantasy, whose temperament was cross-grained and contradictory to a remarkable degree and whose reputation was deservedly suspect and controversial, these fictional accounts provided appropriate and revealing portraits. At different times, and by different people, Beaverbrook was loved, admired, envied, feared, despised and hated. In one guise, he was a sincere patriot, a generous benefactor, a staunch ally and a foul-weather friend. In another, he was a scheming monster, an incorrigible mischief-maker, a vindictive bully and a disloyal opportunist. He was a son of the

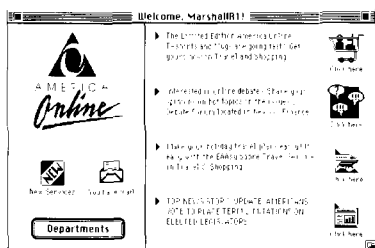
manse, who feared God and feared death; yet he was widely regarded as one of the most sinister and unscrupulous figures of his time. He was a colonial outsider who stormed every citadel of British establishment exclusiveness—in finance, politics and society. Churchill regarded him as "one of my oldest and most intimate friends"; but his wife, Clementine, detested and distrusted Beaverbrook as a "microbe," a "bottle imp." Lady Diana Cooper thought him a "strange attractive gnome, with an odour of genius about him"; yet Clement Attlee remembered him as "the only evil man I ever met."

In life, and in death, Beaverbrook has inevitably attracted his share of biographical attention. The first noteworthy effort was by Tom Driberg, a maverick journalist and Labour M.P. who enjoyed a typical love-hate relationship with Beaverbrook, and whose biography, *A Study in Power and Frustration*, was published in 1956. As a former client who had become a critic, he was well placed, and well equipped, to present a "warts and all" portrait. But Beaverbrook exercised so much control over the final product that it was disappointingly bland, and the promise held out in the perceptive title was never redeemed in the text.

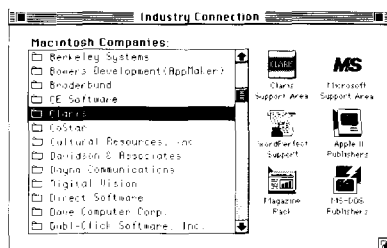
The second attempt, begun soon after Beaverbrook's death in 1964, and based on an extensive examination of his voluminous papers, was by A.J.P. Taylor, a historian rightly renowned for his coruscating wit and deflating irreverence. But he admitted that he had loved Beaverbrook "more than any human being I have ever known," and the resulting book, though predictably readable and entertaining, was too discreetly deferential toward its subject. It failed to deal with Beaverbrook's eventful private life. It did not take seriously the widely held view that he was an evil man. And it made no effort to set him in a broader historical context.

Now, twenty years further on, Anne Chisholm and Michael Davie have made another attempt to retell this twice-told tale. They have worked their way systematically through the Beaverbrook

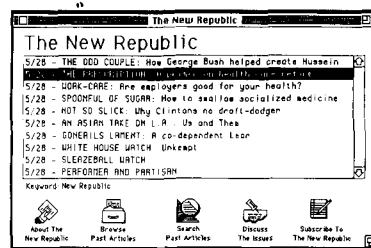
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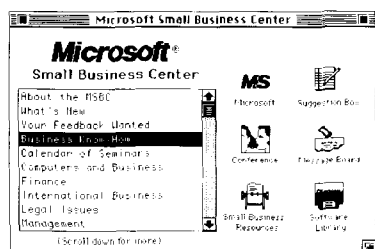
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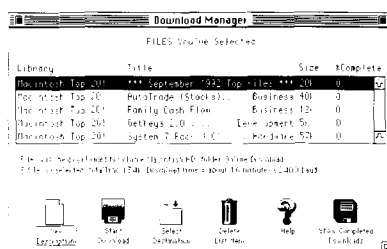
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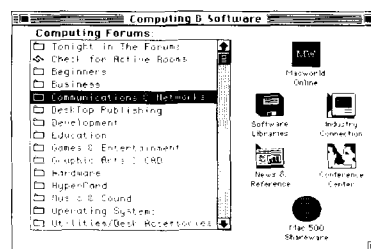
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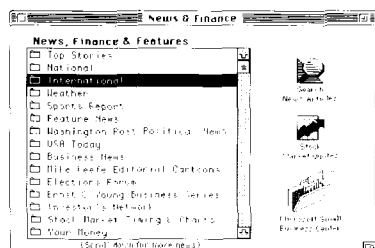
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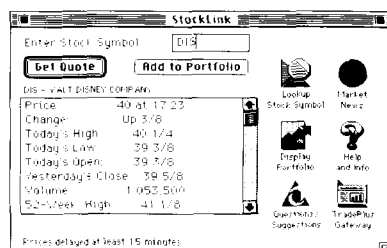
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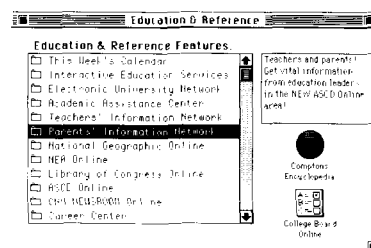
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papers, including some files that Taylor ignored, and have interviewed many of the people who had dealings with him. They have benefited from the vast outpouring of biographical and scholarly work on twentieth-century British history during the last two decades. And thanks to a visit that Davie paid to Beaverbrook in the late 1950s, they have had the advantage of acquaintance with their subject, while never having fallen under his spell—or his curse. The result is a biography that, for the first time, provides a rounded and credible portrait—of the man, the financier, the newspaper tycoon, the Cabinet minister and the collector (and manipulator) of the famous and the beautiful. The rich and fanciful veneer of self-aggrandizing mythology has been painstakingly scraped away, many of the tracks that he so often covered so carefully have been found and followed, and Beaverbrook stands revealed in most, if not quite all, his irresistible, infuriating and irresponsible complexity.

Aitken (who was always known as "Max" to his friends) was born in New Brunswick in 1879, the third son of a Scotch-Presbyterian minister, in circumstances more modestly comfortable than in later life he was inclined to claim. He did not do well at school, and failed to

get into university, but early on discovered that he possessed two unusual and complementary talents: for making money, and for making mischief. He began to sell bonds and insurance, and established himself as a company promoter and broker of mergers and combines. He acquired business interests in the West Indies, became a force on the Montreal stock exchange and was a dollar millionaire by 1907.

Two years later he formed the Canada Cement Company, by merging several other businesses, and in the process made himself another fortune. But his methods were widely regarded as unethical and unscrupulous, and he acquired an unsavory reputation in upper-class circles in Canada (and Britain) that lasted for the rest of his life. In 1906 he had married Gladys Henderson, the daughter of a senior Canadian soldier, who became a beautiful, dignified and long-suffering wife. She bore him three children, tolerated his many infidelities, and when she died in 1927 he seems to have been genuinely—if only briefly—guilt-ridden.

In 1910 the Aitkens moved to England—partly to escape the reverberations of the Canada Cement affair, and partly because his imperialist sentiments inevitably impelled him toward London,

then the undisputed "world city." He soon became friends with another New Brunswick-born Canadian, Andrew Bonar Law, himself an up and coming man in the Conservative Party, and this important connection facilitated Aitken's entry into British politics. Within a year of his arrival in Britain, he had become a Tory M.P. and obtained a knighthood. In 1916 he became a baronet, and soon after he was made a peer.

This astonishing accumulation of honors—which was much frowned upon in royal and aristocratic circles—was a tribute to his backstairs influence rather than to his public achievements. In 1911 he played a part in propelling Bonar Law to the leadership of the Conservative Party. In 1916 he helped bring down Asquith and install David Lloyd George as wartime leader, later serving in his Cabinet as minister of information. And in 1922 he saw his dreams and schemes fulfilled when the Lloyd George coalition fell, and Bonar Law became Conservative prime minister. But within two years Bonar Law was dead, and Beaverbrook's longest period of behind-the-scenes influence was effectively over.

By then, he was already set on his third and fourth careers, as a journalist and contemporary chronicler. Between 1916 and 1923 he acquired the *Daily Express*, launched the *Sunday Express* and took over the *Evening Standard*. He soon established himself as an astonishingly successful newspaper proprietor, dominating his editors and his staff, and rapidly increasing sales and circulation. Between 1928 and 1932 he published *Politicians and the War*, a two-volume account of the fall of Asquith and the rise of Lloyd George, written with characteristic verve and brio, which magnified his own part in the proceedings and was far from even-handed in its treatment of men and events.

But though no longer an insider, Beaverbrook still craved political excitement, and thanks to his newspaper was able to make considerable mischief, especially during the 1930s. He campaigned for "Empire Free Trade" and tried—unsuccessfully—to bring down Stanley Baldwin, the Conservative leader. At the time of the Abdication, he championed King Edward VIII and Mrs. Simpson—once more unsuccessfully. He advocated appeasement, supported Neville Chamberlain, dismissed Churchill as a "busted flush," had at least one Cabinet minister on his payroll and at the same time patronized left-wing figures like Bevan and Michael Foot.

Yet when Churchill came to power in May 1940, he immediately made Beaverbrook minister of aircraft production,

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entrusting him with the perilous task of supplying the fighters without which the Battle of Britain could not have been fought—and won. Once again, Beaverbrook was at the center of events, and for a year he was energetically engaged in the war effort. He was ruthless, piratical and indomitable in commandeering men and materials, and his handling of the new ministry was as tempestuous as it was triumphant. Although Beaverbrook and Churchill had had their differences during the 1930s, they were old friends, and “Max” soon established himself as a member of the prime minister’s inner circle, comforting and cheering him in the darkest of days.

But once the immediate crisis of survival was past, the temptation to make trouble again proved irresistible. He campaigned vociferously for a second front in Europe long before it was a realistic possibility. In the early months of 1942, when disaster was piled on disaster in the Far East and North Africa, he even imagined that he might supplant Churchill as prime minister. And in the general election of 1945, his intransigent attitude toward the Labour Party was seen as a major contribution to the Conservatives’ landslide defeat.

Inevitably, the last twenty years of Beaverbrook’s life were something of an anti-climax. He hated the Labour government of Clement Attlee, was never again invited to hold office by the Conservatives, was out of sympathy with the Welfare State and regretted the decline of Britain and its subordination to the United States. His newspapers, though they still sold well, no longer wielded the influence that they were once thought to have had, and his last campaign, against Britain’s entry into the Common Market, was ill-judged and ultimately ineffectual.

He spent most of his time abroad, in the south of France, the West Indies, the United States and Canada. He was a generous but predictably demanding benefactor to the University of New Brunswick. He comforted and entertained Churchill during his declining years. He commissioned biographies of Lloyd George and Bonar Law, which were written out of materials he had collected and controlled. He himself published *Men and Power* and *The Decline and Fall of Lloyd George*. Not long before he died, he married for the second time. He had arranged his affairs so that virtually no death duties were paid on his enormous fortune; he had his ashes interred in Beaverbrook Town Square, Newcastle, New Brunswick; and he vanished from the scene as mysteriously and as ingeniously as he had first come upon it.

Although the outlines of Beaver-

brook’s extraordinary career have long been well known, Chisholm and Davie provide much new information. They stress the importance of his New Brunswick background in forming his imperialist views. They recount his Canadian business ventures with candor and skill: Beaverbrook clearly sailed far closer to the wind than Taylor was ever prepared to admit. They demonstrate how, in his later histories, he magnified the part he had played in the events of 1911-23. They analyze the methods he used to control his newspapers and to boost their circulations, and show how cavalier he could be with the truth when it suited him. They provide ample evidence of his erratic irresponsibility during the 1930s, when he seems to have taken up causes and individuals and then dropped them, just for the hell of it. They note how tiresome a colleague he must have been in government between 1941 and 1945, scheming, plotting, intriguing and constantly threatening to resign. And they provide an unforgettable picture of Beaverbrook in old age: as a thwarted and frustrated power broker, who was no longer able to play the influential mischief-maker that he had been in his prime.

But it is in their account of Beaverbrook’s private life, and in their evocation of his remarkable personality, that the authors make their most original contribution. They show how difficult—and mutually incomprehending—his relationships almost invariably were with his parents, his siblings and his children. They admit that the full list of the women with whom he was involved will never be known. But it certainly included Venetia Montagu, Rebecca West, Barbara Cartland, Harriet Cohen, Gwen Ffrangcon Davies and Jean Norton. He treated some well, others abominably, and most somewhere in between. They note how fascinated he was by gossip, how good he was at exploiting people’s weaknesses and how he alternated between flattery and terrorism in manipulating his friends and his enemies.

Above all, they insist that he was fundamentally a lonely man, with a low sense of his own self-worth, who was incapable of forming a stable, loving relationship with anyone. He could charm or he could bully; he could give or he could take; he was glad to see his guests arrive and pleased to see them go; but that was the limit of his social and personal repertoire. Although many people genuinely loved him, he was incapable of believing that this was so. No wonder he was so restless, so impatient, so vindictive, so quick to lose his temper, so eager to stir things up.

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Where this biography is less successful is in placing Beaverbrook's life in the broader context of his times. How significant a figure was he? How much influence did he wield? The authors provide much information, but draw no conclusions. To many contemporaries, he was a malign and unscrupulous operator, combining backstairs intrigue with the propaganda power of his papers, who made and unmade ministries, careers and reputations. But while he interfered a great deal, it is less clear how radically different things would have been if he had not done so.

The political convulsions of 1911, 1916 and 1922 would in all probability have taken the course they did, whether Beaverbrook had played a part or not. He failed to carry Empire Free Trade, failed to keep Edward VIII on the throne, and his reputation never really recovered from Stanley Baldwin's memorable retort that by trying to dictate government policy from Fleet Street, Beaverbrook was seeking "power without responsibility—the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages." And even "his hour" as minister of aircraft production has recently come under renewed scholarly scrutiny, which suggests that the greatest jump in fighter output occurred before Beaverbrook himself took over. Throughout his career, the Max factor was never as substantial or as significant as he himself liked to think.

The most helpful way of seeing Beaverbrook is as a product—though obviously not a typical one—of his late nineteenth-century imperial milieu. His first great hero was the British colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, and all his life he believed in some form of close imperial union. He naturally gravitated to Britain, as any successful child of empire did at that time, in search of greater adventures and opportunities. Yet despite his delight in taking London by storm, he always remained an outsider—suspicious of royalty, scornful of the traditional governing classes, hostile to humbug and "high-born voices" and proud of his self-made status. He never really understood that the British cared much less about their empire than he did. And in later life, he never ceased to regret its passing, even as he was powerless to do anything to prevent it. Like most old men, he had long since outlived his day and generation. Father Time was someone whom even William Maxwell Aitken, first Baron Beaverbrook, could not buy, control or manipulate.

DAVID CANNADINE is Moore Collegiate Professor of History at Columbia University and the author most recently of *G. M. Trevelyan: A Life in History* (W.W. Norton).

Olympic Games

BY PETER GREEN

The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony by Roberto Calasso translated by Tim Parks

(Knopf, 405 pp., \$25)

The suburbanization of myth has a long and depressing history. Already by the sixth century B.C., Xenophanes of Colophon was complaining about the improprieties that Homer and Hesiod attributed to the Olympian gods and taking rationalist sideswipes at divine anthropomorphism, pointing out that Thracian gods had red hair and blue eyes, while the black gods of the Nubians had snub noses and woolly hair—and if oxen could draw, he added, guess what their gods would look like. Attacked on one flank by sexual *pudeur*, and on the other by sophistic reason, the old myths suffered serious censorship and secularization even before they got clear of antiquity and into the tender allegorizing hands of medieval Christianity. Roberto Calasso's book shows that this process is still going strong.

Emergent middle-class mores found the miscegenetic habit of Zeus or Pasiphaë embarrassing, the muscle-bound swillings and murders of Heracles somewhat vulgar and the ecstatic rending and devouring of raw flesh practiced by Dionysiac devotees plain scary. Euripides took the whole archaic smorgasbord of divine cannibalism, rape, incest and absolute power and turned it into a deadly theatrical device with which to shock bourgeois sensibilities by serving up raw myth as a framework for social realism. The sophist Protagoras, as is well known, made man the measure of all things, and the Hellenistic age took the process one step further by bringing the gods down into the marketplace and making them behave uncommonly like market shoppers. Thus the divine beings in Apollonius Rhodius's *Argonautica*, for all their immortality and their omnipotence, soothe middle-class sensibilities by aping the speech and the manners of the Alexandrian *lumpenbourgeoisie*.

In the political arena, Protagoreanism was neatly adapted to the ambitions of Alexander's heirs by the fabulist Euhemerus, who opened up the field of dynastic self-invention by proclaiming that the Olympian gods had started life

as great kings or generals whose noble deeds had won them deification: a new kind of enskyment through merit. Alexander's exploits, after all, had arguably eclipsed those of Heracles and Dionysus, and Heracles (as everyone knew) had bridged the gap between earth and heaven. Besides, there were distinct advantages to be had from this kind of God Manifest, who was a good deal more accessible to petitions than the Olympians. When Demetrius the Besieger entered Athens in 290 B.C., he was greeted by a chorus praising his beauty and extolling him as the one true god, since "the other gods are far away, or cannot hear, or are nonexistent, or care nothing for us; but *you* are here, and visible to us, not carved in wood or stone, but real, so to you we pray." No wonder the Epicureans sidelined the Olympians into a remote and ineffectual Elysium.

This erosion of faith in the Olympians—with a corresponding upsurge of interest in foreign cults, preferably violent and visceral, that promised a good deal more emotional bang for the drachma—was bound to have an impact on the attitude toward Greek myth, since the genesis of the latter had been intimately bound up with the Bronze Age development of the old Indo-European pantheon, not least in its uneasy assimilation to indigenous Mediterranean cults such as the Mistress of Beasts or the Mother-Goddess. As the numinous quality drained out of mythic narrative, as urbanism began to defuse the old life-and-death cycle of the year, as meteorology and astronomy curtailed the privileges of weather-gods such as Zeus (no divine bolts, no angry thunder, not even an eclipse), what remained came to be more and more seen as a series of often indecent *contes drolatiques*, as anachronistic material suitable for literary exploitation or philosophical allegorizing. And for escapism, too: all those Euripidean choruses wishing they were far away and quite different, preferably turned into birds, had their logical culmination in Ovid's *Metamor-*

phoses, where the arbitrary urges (more often sexual than not) of Apollo or Zeus could at least be thwarted by the dissolution and the reconstitution of the object as tree or river; while those with divine aspirations could envisage a splendid starry future in the sky, revamped as a constellation.

What got left out was the archaic sense of terror and helplessness in the face of the unknown, a world in which gods behaved like outsize versions of the patriarchs and the viragoes on whom they were unconsciously modeled: powers of nature endowed (because one begins from what one knows) with a human face and human attributes, yet immortal, ageless, untrammelled by even rudimentary morality in the human sense, and as touchy and self-absorbed as the small children whom in so many ways they resembled. To cross them was rather like touching a high-voltage cable: you fried. No canting nonsense about virtue or good intentions could save you.

Science and sophistry got the intellectuals of the Greco-Roman world away from this primal terror but left them with a psychological problem that proved remarkably persistent. (It is still with us today.) Their inherited beliefs were not amenable to sweet reason; their heads told them one thing, their hearts another. An epigram by Callimachus debriefs a dead man: Hades is a fable, he tells his questioner, who cries out in horror, "We are undone!" They desperately needed the myths in which they could no longer believe—not only for psychological comfort, but as a source of moral and social validation. It is extraordinary how often even a rational, ironic intellectual like Ovid will appeal to myth for what today would probably be called empowering precedent. The old platitude about Homer being the Bible of the Greeks is more precisely true than many people realize.

What is even more surprising is the magnetic pull that ancient myth still retains today. Freud, Jung and his epigones Joseph Campbell, Cassirer, Lévi-Strauss: all have dug deeply into various aspects of the mythic tradition (incest seems to be a constant), and each has his devoted followers. The stories that evolved, partly aided by Near Eastern borrowings, among the warring baronies of Mycenaean Greece display universal elements: they have a kind of epidemic appeal, even (or especially) to people with only the haziest notion of the Bronze Age itself. They are, as Jung said, archetypal.

Roberto Calasso is only the most recent fisher to throw a baited hook to

this myth-hungry audience. To judge by the publicity since his book's original appearance in Italy in 1988, the hook is well and truly in. So how does he go about it? What are his assumptions, what ingredients has he put together to form his bait and what kind of person does he have in mind as his captive listener? Not someone like me, that's for sure. By the time I'd slogged my way through nearly 400 pages I felt like the wedding guest pinned down by an unstoppable and archly loquacious Ancient Mariner. Calasso has two styles: jocose but leaden narrative fiction when retailing the myths themselves, and explicatory discourse heavy with assertive aphorisms. The opening words alone almost stopped me: "On a beach in Sidon a bull was aping a lover's coo. It was Zeus." We get the Aeschylean version, the Herodotean version, the Apollodoran version, all refracted through Calasso's suburban eye and platitudinous manner. At times I began to hope that he was putting us on: "Ariadne has been left behind. The clothes fall from her body one by one." But no. What she's in for is Dionysus, "bursting with youth, his Bacchants buzzing all around him."

As for the aphorisms, I began to collect them in a kind of bemused incredulity: "Dionysus's phallus is more hallucinogenic than coercive." "Heracles is contaminated by the sacred, it persecutes him his whole life." "Every notion of progress is refuted by the existence of the *Iliad*." "Since Olympia is the image of happiness, it could only have appeared in the Golden Age." "The dense green in the Peloponnese has a hallucinatory glow to it." "The crown was a mobile *tem-phum*, bringing together election and danger." "What we call Homeric theology was a reckless interval in the lives of the gods." "In Greece, myth escapes from ritual like a genie from a bottle." It's not that these statements are nonsensical; there is a kind of perception at work here. But it is random, arbitrary and self-indulgent.

Calasso has read all the ancient sources and a good deal of the modern scholarship. This makes what he does with his research even more of an anticlimax: all we get is his playful rehashing of various well-known myths as pseudo-fiction, interspersed with obiter dicta on the human condition. Thus, paradoxically, it isn't so much Calasso's scholarship that is at fault, which is the usual trouble with works of this kind. The problem is a lack of creative imagination, the very thing for which Gore Vidal sings his praises on the dust jacket. But then there's enough

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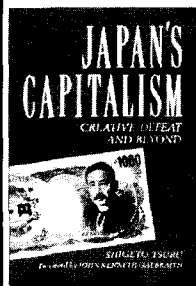
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kinky sex in this book to keep the author of *Myra Breckenridge* happy.

To take the measure of Calasso's inadequacy one need only compare, say, his account of the Minotaur with that given by Michael Ayrton in *The Maze Maker* (1967), which is perhaps the most brilliant re-creation of the ancient mythic mind ever achieved in a modern language. "Asterius has a bull's head," Calasso announces brightly, "because his father was the big white bull Pasiphaë fell in love with." Ayrton, by contrast, goes straight and more radically to the heart of the matter, which is the terrible cloudy inner tension in the Minotaur's mind between beast and man: "Cud gags, cud gags, mounts in his mouth, gags speech, man's speech, cud, cud, no man makes cud, no man near man no man, no man . . ."

Calasso takes as the epigraph to his book a quotation, slightly mistranslated, that he gives as "These things never happened, but always are" and ascribes to "Sallust, *Of Gods and of the World*," an author whom the unwary may identify (as I suspect the translator did) with the Roman historian best known for his monographs on Catiline and Jugurtha. In fact, this Sallust—more correctly, Saloustios—was a Greek Neoplatonist of the fourth century A.D., a friend of the Emperor Julian; and I cannot help wondering whether Calasso took to heart also the opening words of Saloustios's treatise: "Those who would learn about the gods need to have been well educated from childhood and must not be bred up among foolish ideas; they must also be good and intelligent by nature, in order that they may have something in common with the subject." It's somehow of a piece with the rest of his book that he should try and argue for the universalism of his theme from an essay that is a string of Neoplatonic platitudes. Perhaps he was encouraged by the thought that Saloustios, like Julian, was trying to rehabilitate the old gods in the face of

Christianity. Perhaps this is even what appealed to Vidal, though I doubt it.

As the comparison with Ayrton shows, there is a fundamental superficiality about Calasso's approach to his subject. This is partly due to his quest for universality, which leads him to treat all his sources, from Homer to Lucian, from Hesiod to the Byzantine mythographers, as essentially comparable. It is true that he did not set out to write a work of history; and yet his technique robs his presentation of a complicating historical perspective. It also prevents him from remarking upon his own position, which is a little like that of the Hellenistic *littérateurs*, who were full of nostalgia for past tradition, hell-bent on retrieving primal innocence, busy trawling among ancient testimonia for some key to the human condition: etiologizing magpies whose academic taste for obscurity was only equaled by their determination to explain every odd myth and ritual in sight. *These fragments I have shored against my ruins*: Pound and Eliot, too, have contributed to what in many ways presents an uncomfortably similar *mise-en-scène* to that of the Hellenistic age. Calasso is riding a trend.

Which brings me back to his potential audience. Here we have these artfully selected retellings of myth, mainly concerned with sexual goings-on, the gods in human, non-threatening, hot-tubbish mode, with the additional advantages of magical stamina and transformation scenes, Everyman and Superman in one, plus a few pseudo-profundities for cultural uplift that (as Mary Lefkowitz recently observed with great politeness) "do not so much challenge [Calasso's] readers to think hard about what they have been reading as reassure them that they have without real effort experienced something deeply significant." Insofar as Calasso's book is premised on just such passive and credulous readers, and satisfies them that it has done all their work for them,

it is a kind of classifying kitsch. Just who is going to swallow this synthetic pabulum? Much the same people, I suspect, as those of the well-heeled Hellenistic middle classes (with a smattering of intellectual pretensions) who watched the plays of Menander. Calasso has produced a *Tanglewood Tales* for our times, which will please the cultural yup-

pies of Europe and, now, America.

Worse, the book gets one thoroughly depressed, after a while, with Greek myth as such. This is primarily due to Calasso's emphasis on tabloid sex ("With a little girl's infatuation, she described Cadmus's body, fantasized his hand boldly touching her round breasts," and so on) and resolute avoidance of the numinous or truly terrifying (Dionysus becomes a comic stud, Prometheus and his eagle are wisely ignored). Still, it remains true that the ubiquity of rape as a motif ("the sign of the overwhelming power of the divine," Calasso pontificates), the self-absorbed narcissism of these deities, the endless incidents of cannibalism, incest, murder and betrayal do not exactly enhance the bright dawn of Western civilization. It is not the duty of a mythographer, of course, to make the gods look good, or to cheerlead for their culture; but Calasso, while cheerleading with the best of them, still manages to turn his Olympians into comic cutouts.

Calasso leaves us on the verge of literate history ("no one could erase those small letters, those fly's feet that Cadmus the Phoenician had scattered across Greece"), but when forced to face the various nastinesses of Tantalus, Pelops, Thyestes and the rest, he can only argue that "to invite the gods ruins our relationship with them but sets history in motion. A life in which the gods are not invited isn't worth living. It will be quieter, but there won't be any stories." *Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus*. (A mountainous parturition, giving birth to a ridiculous mouse.) Then, as though to disprove his own findings, he throws in long anecdotal digressions on Athens and Sparta in historical times, again chiefly predicated on sex (Athenian pederasty, the sodomization of Spartan brides before marriage). At one point he picks up the idea of reasoned thought (Anaximander, Heraclitus) overriding the paratactic particularities of myth ("like the cipher, like the arrow of Abaris, the *lógos* transfixes in the merest atom of time what the rhapsodies had strung together and repeated over and over for night after smoky night . . . the resulting thrill was without precedent"). But, thrill or no thrill, we end with the comforting thought that the gods are really only outsize funny human beings and that it's sex-and-symbolism that makes the world go round. Baby boomers will buy this book in droves.

PETER GREEN is the author most recently of *Alexander of Macedon: A Historical Biography* (University of California Press).

The Naming for Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan

What's in a name? For you, and now for me,
the echo from a sepia century

of soldiers' boots in a ghetto lane,
pounded doors, the census-taker's refrain:

'What are you?' 'Baker.' 'Tailor.' And the flash
of rabbinical wit—"I am earth and ash."

JON STALLWORTHY

Cracking Down

By JOHN J. DI IULIO JR.

Reckoning: Drugs, the Cities, and the American Future by Elliott Currie

(Hill and Wang, 405 pp., \$25)

The Making of a Drug-Free America: Programs That Work by Mathea Falco

(Times Books, 254 pp., \$22.50)

Against Excess: Drug Policy for Results by Mark A. R. Kleiman

(Basic Books, 474 pp., \$26)

Drug Legalization: For and Against edited by Rod L. Evans and Irwin M. Berent

(Open Court, 355 pp., \$32.95, \$14.95 paper)

The Clinton administration plans to shrink the Office of National Drug Control Policy, also known as the drug czar's office, from nearly 150 staffers to just twenty-five. But as the ONDCP's body shrinks, its head will swell. The next drug czar, we're told, will be elevated to Cabinet-level status. There's a slight historical irony here. In the 1980s it was congressional Democrats, not Reagan-Bush Republicans, who fought for the creation of the drug czar's office. Reagan vetoed a 1983 crime bill he wanted because it contained a drug czar provision. He accepted the drug czar post only as part of a compromise on the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. That bill enjoyed strong bipartisan support. The "Clinton-Gore Crime and Drug Plan" issued from Little Rock during the campaign highlighted the bill as one of Senator Gore's great achievements.

But let no one stand on ceremony. If the new administration's decision to slash the ONDCP while elevating its head embodies a decision to pause and think about drug policy, then it's a very wise decision indeed. For the truth is that no one—not unreconstructed drug warriors, not legalization advocates, not mainstream critics of the war on drugs—has a well-formulated idea of what to do next. After twenty-five years of debate, precious little is actually known about drug use and abuse and drug-related crime in America. And virtually nothing is known about what, if anything, govern-

ment can do (or refrain from doing) to make things better.

During the Nixon administration, the federal government waged its first war on drugs. Since then each drug war has been progressively more ambitious and expensive. The drug war waged by the Reagan and Bush administrations was the most aggressive and costly of them all. Between 1981 and 1989 the number of adult arrests for illegal drug sale or manufacture quadrupled to more than 400,000. Over the same period, the number of arrests for illegal possession more than doubled to nearly 850,000. Federal spending for drug control rose in constant dollars from about \$1.5 billion to \$6.7 billion. By one estimate, in the 1980s all levels of government spent \$100 billion on drug control.

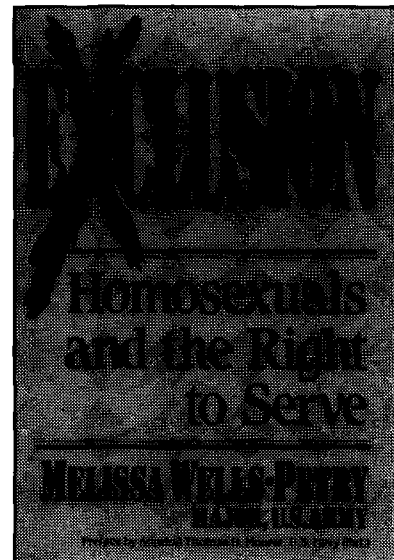
Experts on drug policy generally agree that the war on drugs has failed. There are many different paths to this conclusion, but most analysts proceed from the same basic reading of the data on trends in drug use and abuse. The consensus is roughly as follows: the number of Americans who use illegal drugs is much lower today than it was in the mid-1980s. There has also been a small decrease in the number of drug-abusing Americans—persons whose frequent or reckless use of drugs results in serious problems for themselves or others (child neglect, spouse abuse, job loss, mental or physical debilities). But drug abuse remains a problem in the inner cities.

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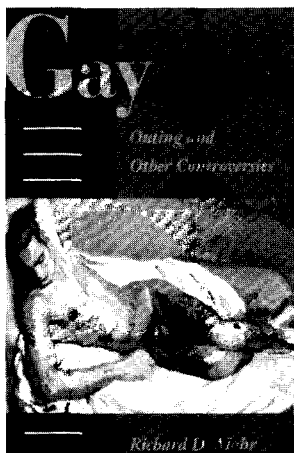
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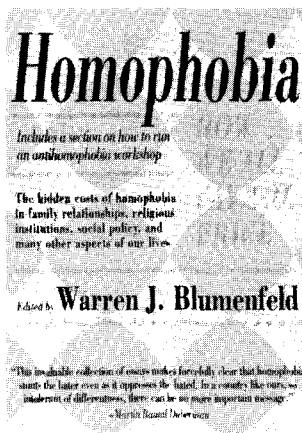
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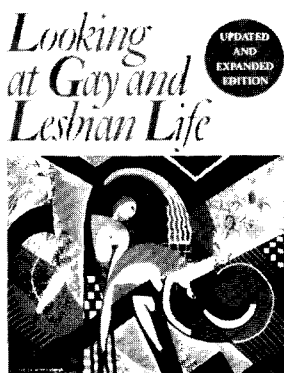
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Currie insists that there are now "two drug problems in America":

One is the problem of the affluent... and it has been steadily decreasing for many years, for reasons unrelated to the drug war. The other one is the problem of America's have-nots. That problem has grown malignantly in the face of the drug war.... The traditional scourge of the inner-city poor—heroin—has quietly spread. And alongside the problems of cocaine and heroin are other dismaying changes: the proliferation of drugs that were barely on the horizon a generation ago, including PCP, methamphetamine, and inhalants; and the devastating link of drug use with AIDS.

The diagnosis sounds reasonable as far as it goes. But the problem with Currie's analysis is that it treats unknowns as givens. The same goes for the analyses of most other leading drug policy analysts. The fact is that survey data on the extent of drug use and abuse in this country are weak and spotty. Even the best estimates of the number of crack-cocaine addicts, for example, are not much more than guesses. And for some drugs, notably heroin, meaningful post-1980 figures are nowhere to be found.

It is also by no means certain that the drug problem is now concentrated or growing mainly or solely among the inner-city poor. For example, a recent Urban Institute study by Ansley Hamid suggests that crack-cocaine use has dropped to a trickle among the young inner-city poor but increased among older and middle-class urbanites. And the relationship between drug abuse and crime remains a chicken-and-egg question. The best empirical studies hint only that drug abuse acts as a "multiplier" of crime: the onset of criminal activity normally occurs prior to drug abuse. Drug abuse only serves to increase the frequency with which some types of offenders commit some types of crimes. Estimates of how much of a multiplier effect drug abuse has on crime are all over the board, and much depends on how one measures "drug-related" crime.

But even if one accepts the consensus reading of the trends, the less than reliable data make it impossible to know whether the war on drugs has had much, little or nothing to do with the national downturn in drug consumption, and equally difficult to fathom what connection, if any, exists between the war on drugs and the condition of the inner cities. Mark A.R. Kleiman offers this intellectually honest if rather defeatist admission about the state of America's drug-and-crime problem: "Public policy toward drugs involves so many unknown, almost unknowable, facts and so many complicated issues of value that any certainty about which of two alternative policies is the better is likely to be misplaced."

Ideological bents aside, there are really just two kinds of drug policy experts: those who know they're skating on empirically thin ice, and those who don't (or who probably do but won't admit it). In at least three areas, the evidence is murkier, and the obstacles to new policies are steeper, than the latter group of experts would have one suppose: international supply-control initiatives, domestic drug law enforcement measures and demand-reduction programs.

Mathea Falco argues that international supply-control initiatives are futile. There is something to be said for this position. The Nixon administration, for example, made vigorous efforts to block the supply of heroin from Mexico and Turkey. During the late 1970s heroin addiction declined. By 1980 Turkey was no longer a supplier and Mexico's share of the U.S. heroin market had fallen dramatically. But the story has an unhappy ending. South and Southeast Asian countries quickly replaced Mexico and Turkey as suppliers for the American heroin market. By 1982 heroin was once again readily available in the United States. Likewise, when the Reagan administration effectively slammed the door on international marijuana smugglers, domestic producers simply increased their production.

Yet there are at least two problems with the way that Falco writes off international supply-control initiatives, one practical, the other analytical. The practical problem is that the global supply of illegal drugs is exploding. According to a recent Brookings Institution study by Stephen Flynn, during the last few years the worldwide production of opium poppy, coca and cannabis has soared. In 1991 cocaine production in Latin America grew by an estimated eighty-five tons. And Eurasia and many other parts of the world have become major suppliers of illegal drugs. The United States has signed numerous bilateral and multilateral treaties that put it at the center of international supply-control efforts. It is hard to imagine how the United States could walk away from these agreements, many of which it twisted foreign arms to get, or how it could ignore the flourishing illegal drug trade overseas.

The analytical problem is that we do not know how much international supply-control initiatives contribute on the margins to reducing the supply of drugs on U.S. streets. Borrowing loosely from research by Peter Reuter of Rand and others, Falco asserts that even if the United States "were to seize half the cocaine coming from South America—a wildly optimistic prospect—cocaine prices would increase by a little more than 5 per-

cent." Since prices are already so low, "such increases would not affect consumption." She adds that "a relatively small volume of drugs can supply our entire market. . . . Four Boeing cargo planes or thirteen trailer trucks can supply American cocaine consumption for a year."

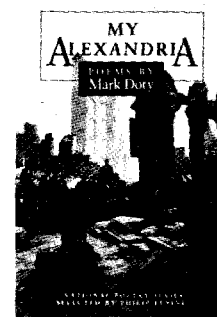
These assertions are too cocksure. The studies on which they're based acknowledge methodological and data problems that Falco ignores. But let's assume that she's right. One must still consider the marginal drug-consumption reduction benefits of international supply-control measures. As James Q. Wilson has argued, these benefits may well be quite small, but that is no excuse for not weighing them. In *Drug Legalization: For and Against*, Wilson agrees that the Nixon administration's measures against heroin from Mexico and Turkey were ultimately defeated by alternative sources of supply. But Wilson, who chaired Nixon's National Advisory Council on Drug Abuse Prevention, stresses that the three-year heroin shortage caused by these measures interrupted the easy recruitment of new users. He cites a major study that found that most Vietnam veterans who had used heroin while in Southeast Asia "gave up the habit when back in the United States. The reason: here, heroin was less available and sanctions on its use were more pronounced."

On the effects of anti-drug law enforcement efforts, Falco parrots the drug war critics' party line. "Record numbers of arrests," she asserts, "have not diminished violent crime, addiction and urban blight." Currie goes further. He declares that the failure of the "punitive" drug wars is "devastatingly obvious":

The failure of American drug policy is depressingly apparent. Twenty years of the "war" on drugs have jammed our jails and prisons, immobilized the criminal justice system in many cities, swollen the ranks of the criminalized and unemployable minority poor and diverted desperately needed resources from the other social needs.

But there is no factual basis for Falco's and Currie's confidence that law enforcement efforts have been all cost, no benefit. Wilson summarizes studies that found a reduction in heroin use among young blacks in Harlem: "Why did heroin lose its appeal for young people? When the young blacks in Harlem were asked why they stopped, more than half answered 'trouble with the law' or 'high cost' (and high cost is, of course, directly the result of law enforcement)."

In fact, it is not unreasonable to argue exactly the opposite of what Currie and Falco do, namely, that the problem with the "get-tough" approach of the last twenty-five years is that it hasn't actually been followed. Despite mandatory sen-



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tencing laws, most drug offenders and other felons continue to spend only a fraction of their sentences behind bars. In 1986 the median time served in confinement was fifteen months, the same as it was in 1976. In 1984 most felons served less than half of their time behind bars.

Indeed, while imprisonment rates (the number of prisoners divided by the total U.S. population) have soared, what might be termed "punitivity rates" (the number of prisoners divided by the number of crimes for which people may be sent to prison) most certainly have not. The number of commitments to state prisons for each 1,000 serious crimes was 163 in 1960, 100 in 1970, 134 in 1980 and 131 in 1989. Between 1975 and 1986 the number of days a criminal could expect to stay in prison was about one-fifth what it was in 1960. And in many states, the likelihood of a convicted felon being sentenced to prison has remained under 50 percent for all crimes except homicide.

The risks of going to prison for drug crimes may be especially low. Based on a survey conducted in Washington, D.C., Reuter has calculated that a drug dealer who makes 1,000 transactions in the course of a year faces an imprisonment risk per transaction of only about 1 in 4,500—much lower than the risks associated with other crimes, such as burglary and robbery. A prisoner self-report survey in 1990 found that the average number of unpunished drug offenses committed each year by the typical prisoner ran into the hundreds. Perhaps this helps to explain why more than half of the prisoner-respondents agreed that experienced criminals "never seriously think about going straight."

Thus the arrest and imprisonment binge of the 1980s can just as well be viewed as mild relief from a starvation diet that began in the 1960s and early 1970s. Currie's and Falco's notion that inner-city citizens would be better off with even less criminal justice action against the predatory street punks and drug gangsters in their midst borders on the fanciful. Like Currie and Falco, Kleiman doubts that stepped-up enforcement efforts would make much of a difference. But he is at least open to the evidence that "the benefits to potential victims of confining the average predatory criminal" may exceed the costs. And he acknowledges that "the law enforcement system is most inadequate where

poor people live and least likely to take seriously crimes against them or occurring in their neighborhoods."

When it comes to putting something in place of the war on drugs, Falco opts for a new generation of "demand-reduction" policies. She makes her case by stringing together anecdotes about "programs that work"—prevention programs for elementary and secondary schoolchildren; treatment programs for addicted criminals; education programs sponsored by corporations; and take-back-the-streets programs forged between neighborhood groups and local police. She insists that "a drug-free America is within our grasp" because "we have learned how to reduce demand successfully."

I wish that Falco was right, but she's not. The plural of anecdote is data, but there is no solid evidence that successful drug education, prevention and treatment programs can be duplicated widely. Her inspiring vignettes do nothing to alter this unfortunate reality. So far as anyone can tell, successful programs depend on the lucky accident of caring and competent providers. The talents, energies and ethics of the people who make these programs work do not travel well and cannot be cloned by policy fiat, however well intentioned.

The one exception seems to be prison-based drug treatment programs. Over the last five years, the federal prison system developed a multidimensional (education, counseling, after care) drug treatment program that has benefitted thousands of inmates. With only slight federal assistance, many states have followed suit. More and better prison-based drug treatment programs are surely needed.

By 1990 state prisons had more than 100,000 drug education and counseling slots, and many systems reported a surplus of spaces. But all slots are not created equal. There is tremendous state-by-state variation in how the treatment needs of prisoners are assessed and handled behind bars. Data are shaky, but most research finds that anywhere from 40 to 80 percent of arrestees and prisoners have used or abused drugs at some point in their adult lives. Thus, were all states to follow the federal system's drug classification and treatment protocols, my rough guess is that we'd probably need at least 450,000 slots nationwide for a total prison population of around 900,000.

Inexplicably, Falco seems unaware of the promise in prison programs, misplaying the evidence on all sides. She cites only one narrowly focused General Accounting Office report that concluded that drug treatment in federal prisons is

inadequate, and that most prison-based drug treatment programs are ineffective, despite plenty of other research to the contrary. She laments Americans' "ambivalence toward 'treating' criminals even when their crimes are directly related to addiction," adding that "Americans are reluctant to approve any additional spending for the already costly criminal justice system." But every opinion survey shows strong public support for treating addicted criminals, and increased spending on criminal justice remains highly popular.

Currie doesn't share Falco's faith in programs as the answer to the nation's drug-and-crime dilemma. He rejects all "traditional strategies" (law enforcement, treatment, legalization, international interdiction). Finding what he thinks are profound policy lessons buried in outdated urban sociology textbooks, he claims that the only way to save "the American future" is by a complete overhaul of the cities' social and economic structures.

Currie proposes that this overhaul be accomplished by massive public infrastructure spending, tax reform, health and welfare reform and a few other major policy changes that, if enacted, would make the Great Society look like a rider to a National Monuments Service appropriations bill. His hugely expensive recommendations are politically impossible. They are tantamount to a loud paleoliberal whine that will produce nothing.

Kleiman's virtues as a policy analyst are his undoing as a policy adviser. Overly mindful of the ambiguities in the evidence, he dishes out a bunch of drug policy vanillas—"low-arrest strategies," higher taxes on alcohol, nicotine and (maybe) marijuana, and a vaguely worded call for a new legal category of "grudgingly tolerated vices." On cocaine, heroin and other substances that have a "high ratio of problem abuse to total use," he tips his hat to the status quo.

Given the limited state of knowledge, what should the next drug czar, feet elevated firmly on the Cabinet table with twenty-five staffers at hand, do? If he or she wants to gain some real intellectual leverage on the job, I would suggest two things. First, confront openly the \$64,000 questions about the efficacy of anti-drug law enforcement. As the drug legalization advocate Ethan Nadelmann has observed, there are a certain number of citizens for whom drug laws represent the principal bulwark between an abstemious relationship with drugs and a self- and other-destructive one. Whatever direction the next drug war takes, it would be immensely useful to know more about the likely magnitude

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and composition of this vulnerable population.

The intellectual climate is right for such a probe. Contrary to the impression left by Falco and Currie, today's leading voices for and against drug legalization make no claims about their ability to predict what any given form of legalization might bring. Nadelmann admits that the variables are too numerous and our analytical tools too paltry to know whether legalizing some or all drugs would do more harm or good. Wilson concedes that it's impossible "to know what our society would be like if we changed the law to make access [to illegal drugs] easier." Although he believes strongly (as I do) that legalizing drugs would probably have disastrous social consequences, he admits, "I may be wrong. If I am, then we will needlessly have incurred heavy costs in law enforcement and some forms of criminality."

Whatever the future direction of drug policy in this country, some good might come from debating the legalization option more openly than it has been so far. At a minimum, it might help to clarify the costs and benefits of alternative drug control policies and mop up some popular misconceptions in the bargain. Let me offer just two examples.

Legalization advocates are hardly alone in believing that the war on drugs has placed tens of thousands of petty first-time drug-law violators behind bars. Not so. In 1991 more than 93 percent of all state prisoners were violent offenders, repeat offenders (one or more prior felony convictions) or violent repeat offenders. The vast majority of "drug" criminals behind bars were convicted of sale or manufacture, not simple possession, and had prior criminal records. Many of them would be and should be incarcerated even if the anti-drug laws did not exist.

On the other hand, drug legalization experts are almost certainly right in questioning the general deterrence value of anti-drug law enforcement. By locking up serious drug criminals, society buys protection from the crimes (and not just drug crimes) that these particular offenders would have committed if they were free. That alone may make imprisoning them well worth the price. But drug warriors have greatly underestimated the extent to which drug offenders taken off the streets are immediately replaced by others.

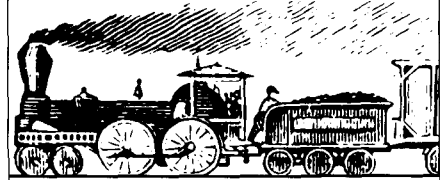
In addition to debate, the new drug czar might use his or her bully pulpit to encourage states and localities to enforce existing anti-drug laws. I'm not talking about "getting tougher." I'm talking

about changes in enforcement strategies and correctional practices that would keep serious drug-law violators behind bars for 70 percent to 80 percent of their terms in accordance with the mandatory sentencing laws that are now on the books in many jurisdictions. As it now stands, fewer than half of those convicted of drug trafficking are sentenced to prison. In 1988 the average maximum sentence imposed on drug traffickers was five-and-a-half years. But the estimated time actually served by drug dealers was just twenty months, or less than one-third of the average maximum sentence length. Briefly, this "radical experiment"—the serious enforcement of existing laws—would involve at least three steps.

First, we need to put at least 100,000 more cops on foot patrol in the inner cities. The federal government can and should pay for it. I'm all for community policing, but let's recognize that cops are not community kibitzers with badges. They are trained and authorized to use force in detecting and arresting people who break the law. Second, prosecutors and judges would need to tighten the screws on drug-law violators who are used to copping pleas to lesser charges and spending little or no time locked up. And, third, while we have offenders in hand, let's make participation in well-structured drug treatment programs a condition of any type of furlough and any form of early release or parole. The federal government should mandate these programs, and pay for them, too. Whatever else may be true about the nation's drug and crime problem, there is no practical or moral substitute for ridding poor inner-city neighborhoods of people who assault, rape, rob, burglarize, deal drugs and murder. The law-abiding people who live in these places demand and deserve such protection.

Finally, would-be drug czars take note: only three cents of every government dollar goes for criminal justice agencies. The federal government spends barely a penny of every dollar on justice. With the connivance of former OMB chief Richard Darman, Bush routinely halved the spending requests of the first drug czar, William Bennett. A "drug-free America" is not possible. But it may yet be possible, and highly affordable, to devise ways of better protecting inner-city Americans from drug punks, street gangsters and other criminals.

JOHN J. DI IULIO JR. is professor of politics and public affairs at Princeton University, and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.



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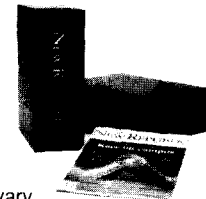
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WARSAW DIARIST

Ghetto politics

I AM IN POLAND NOT TO VISIT ITS present but out of fidelity to its past—or, rather, to my own past—and to be with what is no longer here, a visit to ruins and to memories. My parents left Poland long before the War, leaving behind, between them, sixteen brothers and sisters and (save for one teenager who ran the British blockade to Palestine and one who survived by going East) all of their siblings' children. The cousins I never knew were among the 3,200,000 Jews who perished in the great catastrophe, their places of death a threnody of murder: Belzec, Auschwitz, Sobibor, Maidanek, Treblinka. Nearly 450,000 of these Jews had lived in Warsaw, 40 percent of the population, more Jews than in any city but New York. In the fall of 1940, with 100,000 others from outlying areas, they were herded into the newly demarcated ghetto, 150,000 per square kilometer. Daily food rations were 230 calories. By summer a fifth of them had died of hunger and typhus. Then the deportations to the camps began, 5,000 to 6,000 a day.

MEANWHILE, OF COURSE, AS ELSEWHERE in occupied Europe, a Jewish underground was formed that carried out acts of sabotage and revenge. But the Jewish Combat Organization (ZOB) had only the weapons it could smuggle and steal. Aside from a few diversionary maneuvers it received almost no help from the well-armed non-Jewish resistance. Still, the ZOB rose up on April 19, 1943, waging its war against the tormentors for more than a month. This was the first popular revolt against the Germans anywhere. It was not stilled until the Wehrmacht had torched the entire ghetto.

WARSAW IS NOW MARKING THE fiftieth anniversary of the uprising. I came to the observances as a member of the U.S. delegation led by Vice President Gore, who spoke at the central event, along with President Lech Walesa and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The Polish-Jewish relationship is a heavy drama all its own; the experience of the war did not lighten its text, and both heads of state alluded to it. Polish anti-Semitism is, after all, an old habit. But it did not protect the Poles from the fiendish force of the Nazis. Moreover, the very piety that made many

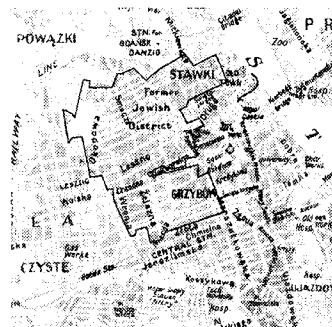
Poles hate the Jews also gave them the strength to resist communism, which persecuted Jew and Catholic alike. So the theme of historic reconciliation, so fragile in the past, is heard once again. The fluttering flags of the two nations all over Warsaw are omens of that reconciliation, the attention of the media a sign that there is a curious, if not exactly eager, Polish public. Tens of thousands of Jews—most of them returned survivors of the ghettos and camps, with their families—stood with tens of thousands of Poles before the (alas, socialist realist) ghetto fighters' memorial. The Israeli anthem Hatikvah was sung and the somber cadences of the ancient remembrance Kaddish were chanted, yes, here in Poland, in the open, in our time. We held lighted candles. A new Polish friend pointed out that there were also lighted candles in the windows of many apartments surrounding the site.

ONE MEMBER OF OUR delegation is Jan Karski, at 80 courtly, taut and ironic, a retired professor at Georgetown whose courses Bill Clinton did not take. No ordinary professor he, however; no ordinary Pole, either. An agent of the exile government, he smuggled himself out of Poland in 1942 to alert the world to the unfolding crime against the Jews. Stalking the corridors of power, he was allowed to tell his story many times, once to FDR. It is said that the powerful did not believe what Karski told them, and maybe some really didn't. But he is convinced that they already knew, that they couldn't have not known, and that the agony of the Jews was simply a sideshow. Karski is one of "the righteous among the nations," and when Walesa mentioned that he was in our midst the crowd's sudden hush indicated that the people knew they were in the presence of one of those obsessives whose obsessions make him both brave and good.

A WIDELY USED GUIDE TO WARSAW enumerates the "traces of the Jewish presence" in the city, and bare traces they are. The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation is devoting itself to nurturing the living traces, and doing so all over central and eastern Europe. It turns out that late twentieth-century Marranos, hidden Jews, in number more than anyone imagined, terrified by the Nazis, made sullen by communism, are seeking to give meaning to a repressed identity for themselves and their children. This is, at best, a precarious undertaking. Or, as the Yiddish poet Jacob Glatstein wrote:

The night is endless for a dead people.
Heaven and earth are erased.
The light in your shabby tent disappears.
The last Jewish hour flickers.
Jewish God,
You, too, are almost gone.

ROAD SIGNS AT AN INTERSECTION near our hotel: Bialystok to the right; Lodz straight ahead; Kielce, Katowice, Lublin to the left. Polish cities, of course, but for me places on a family tree, the last broken shards of Jewish life. We know about these places because doomed men and women wrote down what happened at the end, acts of faith at once obsessed, stark and unconsoling. "This journal is



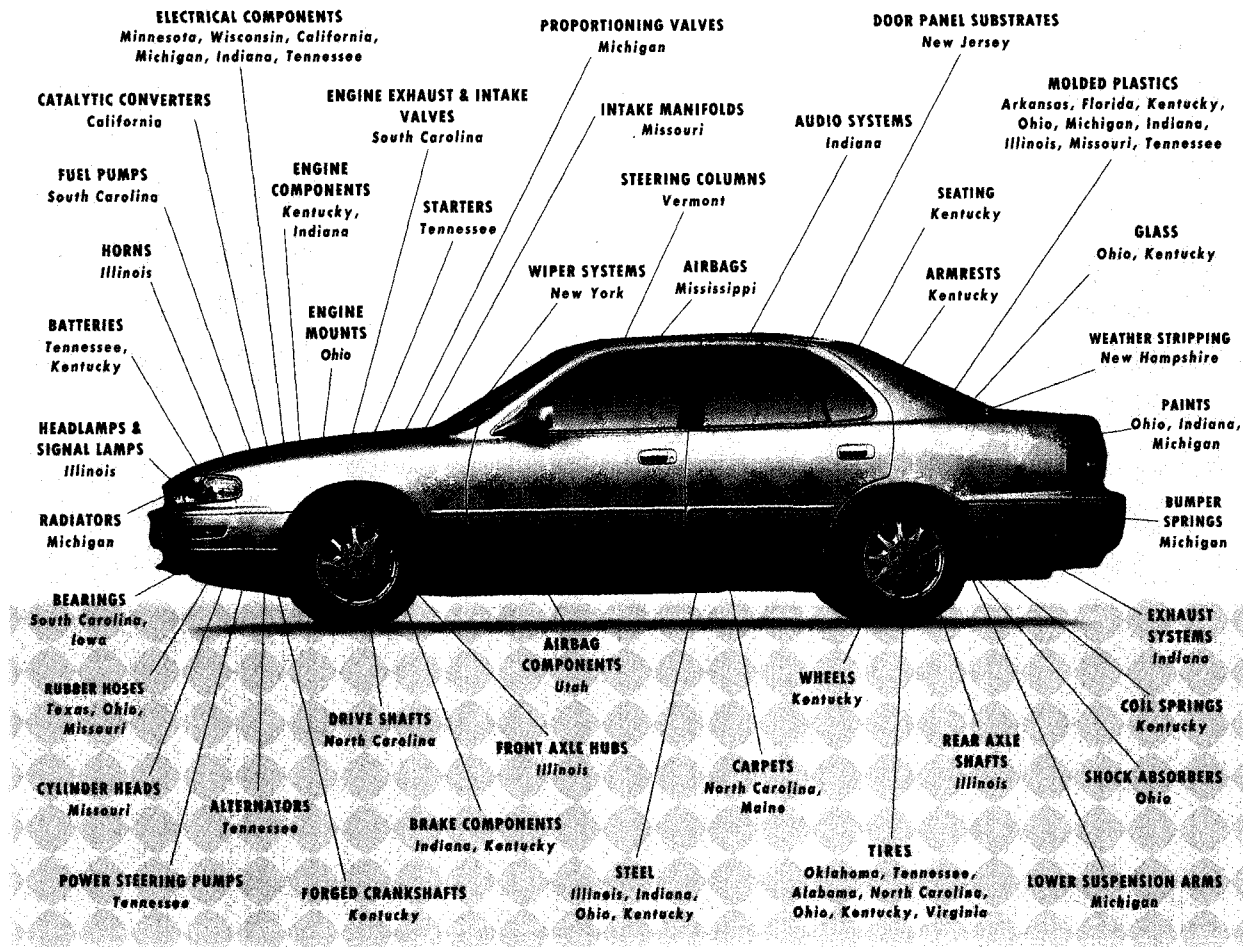
my life," wrote Chaim Kaplan in his Warsaw diary, published as *Scroll of Agony*, "... darkness hides the murderers' abominations." But the victims understood that only their chronicles and cantos would lift the darkness. When the great historian Simon Dubnow was dragged out of the Riga ghetto he shouted to those

around him, "Write down everything you see and hear. Keep a record of it all." Zalmen Gradowski, who fell in a revolt he spearheaded at Auschwitz, confidently buried four manuscripts on quotidian life in the camp. On top of each he wrote, "Pay heed to this document, for it contains valuable material for the historian." Just the other day I saw the Warsaw ghetto archives, a historical enterprise at the seventh level of Gehenna. Emanuel Ringelblum instructed his co-workers to "write as if the war were already over" and the offenders were being brought to justice. But what justice is there for one-and-a-half million children?

MARGARET THATCHER WAS IN WARSAW, too, and she said what was on everyone's mind and on no one's tongue. "You and I never expected to see concentration camps in our lives again." She was speaking about Bosnia, derisive about the U.N., impatient with Europe, mystified by the United States. "The lesson of this century," she went on, "is that Europe will only be peaceful if the Americans are on this continent." She did not mean in Germany, staring at the hapless Russian troops who can't go home because there's no place to house them. Never again? "Never again" was both credo and lesson of the post-Holocaust period. Well, it won't happen to the Jews again, being now able to defend themselves, bravely and brilliantly. But for the Bosnians and for others, "never again" is a bitter joke.

MARTIN PERETZ

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